

Convicts help spiff up schools

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"These people aren't child molesters. They are screened and there are supervisors present," Skrocki said.

Neither Clarenceville nor any other participant has reported problems, district court Judge Robert Drzezinski said.

"These people have been assigned to schools and churches, they've worked at Greenmead and at the Wilson Barn without any incidents," Drzezinski said. "The feedback we've gotten has been 100 percent positive."

Part of that feedback has involved savings.

Those using the workforce pay \$15 per day, per worker, for services — a fee considerably lower than that paid outside contractors.

"We don't have a figure for how much this is saving us, but we believe the figure would be in the thousands," Skrocki said.

Worker fees are paid to the district court. They are used to pay for supervisors, equipment and processing costs.

IN CLARENCEVILLE, Skrocki said, workers perform tasks "over and above" those routinely performed by district janitors.

"These are the kind of things where we'd usually go with an outside contractor," Clarenceville has been involved

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— Ralph Skrocki
Clarenceville asst. superintendent, finance

with the program for three years. Last summer, alternative workforce members cleaned grounds and trimmed shrubbery around school buildings.

"Well in excess of 100 people" are currently sentenced to the workforce, Drzezinski said.

Work force members are most frequently assigned to clean local highways.

The majority are second time drunk drivers, shoplifters or other minor felons, he added.

Supervisors are drawn from police, court officers and city employees, Drzezinski said.

The work force began 20 years ago, in part to reduce crowded conditions at the Wayne County Jail.

Despite eventual construction of two additional jail buildings, the latest in Hamtramck, work force programs are expected to continue.

Hills honored for sound budget

For the seventh consecutive year, the city of Farmington Hills has been honored by the Government Finance Officers Association for its annual budget.

The city is among about 500 communities of the 11,000 governments participating in the non-profit association that has been given the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. The association includes 9,500 government finance professionals throughout the United States and Canada, according to a press release issued by the city.

Charles Rosch, Farmington Hills finance director, said the award represents "recognition by your peers of the competence and integrity you put into your work."

The award is also something city officials can show leading financial organizations such as Standard &

Poors and Moody's, which review the city's financial standing. That affects the city's financial rating for bonds, for example.

EACH YEAR, Rosch's staff sends out budget forms to the city's departments. Department heads make their budget requests, which are reviewed by Rosch and City Manager William Costick.

Rosch and his staff develop the narratives for each department — explaining major functions of each department and the financial outlook for each department — that are included in the annual budget.

"The finance department makes this thing flow," Rosch said. "We make sure the goals and objectives are all in there."

In order to qualify for the award, the city's budget is reviewed by a

panel of independent experts who determine if the document is proficient in major categories. The award is valid for only one year and a comprehensive list of improvements is submitted to the finance director to include in future budgets in order to retain the award.

The budget is evaluated for its effectiveness as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide and a communication device.

As a policy document, the budget sets forth the city council and administration's policies, goals and objectives, as well as strategies and methods of accomplishing and monitoring the goals.

THE FINANCIAL planning aspects of the budget insure that a comprehensive financial plan is approved for all the operating funds of the city, as well as capital and in-

frastucture needs and the proper management of the city's debt levels.

The financial plan includes actual revenues, expenditures and the year-end financial position for the previous year and projections for the current year, as well as the proposed budget year.

The operations guide establishes the relationships and functions of the city departments, commissions and programs.

Rosch said the communications part of the budget is designed to help the public understand the operations and functions of the city and its departments. The budget is designed to inform the reader of the sources and uses of the city's financial resources in delivering services as well as its projected financial position at the end of the budget year.

Simple precautions reduce winter's chill

It's pretty. But the snow and cold weather can be dangerous unless you take some simple precautions.

The Farmington Hills Disaster Service has provided the following tips to follow during winter storms and cold weather. From 1970-1980, about 450 people died every year. From the excessive cold. Deaths continue to increase every year.

First, you should know what terms are used by weather forecasters to tell you what's about the hill the area:

- A traveler's advisory is issued when enough ice and snow are expected to hinder travel but the anticipated conditions are not serious enough to require warnings.
- Freezing rain means expected rain is likely to freeze as soon as it hits the ground, creating a coating of ice on roads and walkways.
- Sleet is small particles of ice mixed with rain. Sleet accumulation causes roads to freeze over or become slippery.

- A winter storm warning means that heavy snow, sleet or freezing rain are expected.
- A winter storm watch means that severe winter weather is possible.
- A blizzard warning means that heavy snow and winds of 35 miles per hour or more are expected.
- A severe blizzard warning means that very heavy snow is expected with winds of more than 45 miles per hour and temperatures below 10 degrees.

- To prepare for a storm:
- Keep a battery-powered radio and flashlight in working order.
- Store food that can be prepared without an electric or gas stove.
- Stock emergency water and cooking supplies. Have candles and matches available in case of a power outage.
- Make sure you have sufficient heating fuel. Have available some kind of emergency heating

- equipment and fuel so you can keep at least one room of your house warm enough to be liveable. If your furnace is controlled by a thermostat and your electricity is cut off by a storm, you will need emergency heat.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure your family knows how to use them and knows basic fire prevention.

- Always listen to radio or television for weather updates that will allow you to prepare for a coming winter storm.
- Dress for the season by wearing many layers of thin clothing. Wear mittens, instead of gloves, as well as a hat. Cover your mouth with scarves to protect your lungs from directly inhaling extremely cold air.
- If shoveling heavy snow isn't critical, don't do it. If you must shovel, don't overexert yourself. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack — a major cause of death during and after winter storms.

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