



New power lines

This is the planned route of Edison's new 120 kilovolt power lines. Placed atop 80-foot poles, Edison officials hope the new lines will help alleviate power outages in Farmington Hills.

RAY BY BROWN/DESIGNER & ELECTRICIAN

Power line from page 1A

Read and turn south to the Southfield station on Inkster, just north of 11 Mile.

The only glitch, according to city officials, is that at the half-mile point between Inkster and Middlefield roads, the utility has no easements. Efforts are underway to obtain right-of-way from Michigan National Bank on the north side of 1-696.

If that doesn't work, efforts will turn to obtaining right-of-way from the south side along Camelot Court and Farm Meadows subdivisions where new berms have been built to buffer freeway noise.

"We'll see if people oppose this route when Detroit Edison tries to obtain right-of-way," Vagnozzi said. "I don't particularly like it on the south side of 1-696, I hope Michigan National is a civic-minded corporation and will see the need for this."

City Manager William Costick says he is optimistic about the new route, particularly because it heavily follows existing pole lines and avoids residential areas.

"I think we're avoiding environmentally sensitive areas," Costick said. The new electrical poles will be about 10-15 feet taller than existing poles. The 80-foot poles are necessary because of increased voltage and the need for additional spacing between conductors, Eix said. The taller poles are now in place on the south side of 1-696. They can be seen east from the Halsted Road overpass.

The location of the new 120 KV line has been under dispute for more than two years. But the first phase of planned improvements, which involved connecting the

'I think it's probably the least disruptive route to residents.'

Larry Eix
Detroit Edison

Drexel substation at 12 Mile and Drake roads to a substation along Haggerty Road near 1-696, is now complete.

The second phase includes the 120 KV line going east. A route proposed two years ago, which would have required right-of-way from property owners almost the entire distance, met with opposition from residents, naturalists and Oakland Community College-Orchard Ridge officials.

Edison also plans to add six circuits, six new circuit breakers and new transformers in the east half of Farmington Hills.

These efforts are expected to improve electrical reliability in southeast Farmington Hills, where residents and business owners recently petitioned the utility for improved service, Eix said.

Since improvements were made to the Drexel substation, complaints about power outages, as well as the length of outages that do occur, have decreased, Costick said.

"I think service has improved, especially in the northwest section of the city. With the extra energy (from the 120 KV line), we can bring in more power," Costick said.

Vagnozzi, however, is withholding final comment on Edison's improvements. "The northeast, southeast and southwest sections of the city still needs more work."

Local schools ring in new year

It's back to school time for Farmington-area students in the coming weeks, with classes beginning in the Farmington schools next week, and in Walled Lake Consolidated and Clarenceville districts the following week.

Although most students attend school in the Farmington district, some Farmington Hills residents in the southeast corner of the city are served by Clarenceville and in the northwest

corner by Walled Lake.

In Farmington, teachers will report on Monday, Aug. 24, with students arriving for a half day in the afternoon on Tuesday then it's back to school full-time beginning Wednesday. Clarenceville teachers report on Aug. 31 with students starting half-days on Tuesday, Sept. 1. Walled Lake teachers report Aug. 27-28, with students reporting on Monday, Aug. 31, for a

half-day session in the morning.

A story in Monday's Observer incorrectly said Farmington Public Schools students would only report for half-days next week. It should have indicated the following: teachers will report on Monday, Aug. 24; students are to report on Tuesday, Aug. 25 in the afternoon only; and starting on Wednesday, Aug. 26, students will report for full days.

Learning from page 1A

area. Our whole training calendar is completely filled up."

She called the changes "restructuring and retooling" the schools for the future.

Over at Gill Elementary on the southwest side of Farmington Hills, Principal Michael Duff is preparing to welcome his traditional students, plus about 90 students who will participate in a year-round "school-within-a-school" program there. An excited Duff called the pilot program "dynamic" and hopes for a lot of team teaching and other innovative programs. "I'm really excited about it," Duff said. "It's going to be an excellent program. All the success factors are built in."

The year-round program has about 79 Gill youngsters enrolled, with the remainder from several other elementary schools in the district including Beechview, Lakeland and Woodlake. Students in the pilot program represent grades kindergarten through four, with more boys than girls enrolled, Duff said.

At North Farmington High School, a "zero hour" has been

added before the traditional school day, four days per week to allow students to take additional academic classes which they cannot fit into their schedule. A two-hour block of teacher planning time is scheduled for Wednesday mornings, and classes have been adjusted the remainder of the week to accommodate the change.

Harrison educators are adding a new program called LINK — Learning Through Interdisciplinary Knowledge — which is designed to do away with a fragmented approach to learning. Aimed at ninth graders, the program is designed to "link" various subjects with a block teaching approach.

At all four middle schools in the district, about 125 sixth graders at each school will be part of a new block scheduling program and team teaching program. Planning for lessons in reading, math, social studies and science will all be done together and coordinated among a team of teachers, White said. Eventually, she said, the concept could move to other grades.

Rumors false on health benefits

Farmington school officials say they are proposing no changes in employee health benefits in this year's contract negotiations, despite rumors this week to the contrary.

Employee relations director Sue Zurvalec said the district has proposed five different options for consideration, including choices which "include the current health plan," she said. "It's really important the word get out. We've already hearing rumors that 'they're going to take away our health insurance.'"

School officials have said they are looking at the entire employee compensation package, including health insurance, wages and other benefits, in a sort of "cafeteria-style" bargaining approach.

The Farmington Public School District is negotiating

'It's really important the word get out. We're already hearing rumors that "they're going to take away our health insurance."'

Sue Zurvalec
Farmington schools

with teachers, maintenance and food service workers and support personnel represented by three different unions affiliated with the Michigan Education Association. Contract talks were scheduled to begin Wednesday and run through Sunday.

Teachers are scheduled to report for work Monday.

Their contract will expire at the end of August; the two other unions are working under contract extensions through August.

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