

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Power outage: The Observer & Eccentric's Livonia office was without power from midnight Thursday until after 6 p.m. Friday because of a disconnected cable. The power outage also took down our telephone system. We apologize for any inconvenience to readers and customers who were unable to reach us.

Crime spree: Farmington Hills Police are investigating a rash of break-ins and thefts, including a stolen van, at the Hunter's Ridge Apartments./2A

Goals: The Farmington Hills Public Safety Department sets its goals for 1993./3A

Charged: Two Detroit men are charged with the armed robbery of a Comfort Inn in Farmington Hills, the second such robbery in a month./3A

COUNTY NEWS

Just the facts: Sheriff John Nichols asks the county board to reserve judgment on ongoing investigations until they are complete./7A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

No perfume?: A Birmingham-based expert on business dressing provides tips to help you make wise choices with your shopping dollars./9A

TASTE



Carnival fun: Join the party, put on a pot of gumbo, and invite friends over for a Mardi Gras feast./1B

Wine column: Serve champagne or sparkling wine with Louisiana-style crabmeat, crawfish, shrimp or oyster entrees./1B

SPORTS

Volleyball champ: Harrison High defeated perennial power Livonia Churchill to win its first Western Division championship./1C

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Firefighter of the Year



SHARON LEMMON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Smoke finder: Firefighter Jim Cheyne looks for the source of smoke within the cab of a fire truck.

Firefighting runs in family

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

It didn't take much convincing by his father for Jim Cheyne to become a volunteer firefighter in 1983. Now you couldn't convince him to quit his "part-time job."

Cheyne, 31, was honored by the local Veterans of Foreign Wars recently as Farmington Hills Firefighter of the Year. The Optimist

Club also named him as the top firefighter for 1992.

"I'm here to stay," he says matter-of-factly as he stands arms akimbo in the venerable Fire Station No. 3 on Grand River. "They're going to have to drag me out of here."

Cheyne, who works for Novi's Public Works Department, said that he looked up to his father, who

was a volunteer with the department from 1972 to 1978. And although the job has meant a great deal of time away from his family, the satisfactions have been great.

"We had an incident where a man had a cardiac arrest at a restaurant," he said. "We did our job and he ended up walking out of the

See FIREFIGHTER, 4A

Gov. Engler's tax cut would 'destroy system'

See story, 5A

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

New that Gov. John Engler's proposed 20-percent tax cut has set sail in the state legislature, Farmington Public Schools officials have a sinking feeling.

If the plan passes, Farmington schools would lose \$16 million in revenue, officials say.

The bill made it through the state Senate Wednesday and now goes to the House. Attached to it is an amendment saying money lost will be replaced.

Not stated, however, is exactly

SCHOOLS

where those funds will come from. That leaves some school officials queasy.

"It talks about it . . ." said assistant superintendent of finance Bruce Barrett. "It still leaves a lot of varia-

bility in the language in how it would leave some districts."

Out-of-formula districts such as Farmington would be left in a precarious position. The choice would be to either accept the cuts or ask voters for more money.

See TAX CUT, 4A

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Club in Livonia. Any beautiful babies?

Wanted: beautiful babies (are there any other kind?) for the 14th annual Baby Beautiful Contest sponsored by the Farmington Area Community Women to benefit the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Babies should be no older than 36 months by April 2 — the deadline for entries. Prizes donated by local merchants will be awarded to two babies in each of four age groups: newborn to 6 months, 7-12 months, 13-24 months and 24-36 months. Information on baby and parents (names, ad-

dress, birthdate of baby and phone number) should be mailed along with a photo of the baby with the baby's age in the photo on the back to: Baby Beautiful Contest, C/O 36196 Fox Glen, Farmington Hills 48331.

A minimum donation of \$5 is requested.

Memory Lane

From the Feb. 12, 1953, edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

■ Farmington and Livonia police raided what was described as a teenage drinking party on Farmington Road in Livonia, and arrested the resident who was later charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor.
■ Plans were completed for the annual World Day of Prayer which was to be held Feb. 20, 1953, at the Salem Evangelical and Reformed Church in Farmington.

Bate is back at PO

■ Mark Bate, no stranger to the Farmington Post Office, has been officially installed as its postmaster. He was interim postmaster for more than a year.

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER



Mark Bate is as surprised as anyone to be named postmaster for Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Bate, who served a controversial term as interim postmaster from January of 1991 until March of 1992, was officially installed as postmaster in Farmington on Friday.

But he thought he would be postmaster of New Baltimore right up until the day he was to start that job, Jan. 21.

"I was ready to go to New Baltimore," he said. "I didn't know I'd be here until that Thursday."

Farmington Hills Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi, with whom Bate initially clashed over postal hours and service, said he also was surprised by Bate's appointment.

"I would hope that he would continue the progress they've made in the past few months," said Vagnozzi, who was Hills mayor during part of Bate's interim tenure.

Bate, 33, came at a difficult time for area postal workers. Four postal workers had been killed during a shooting spree by a disgruntled former Royal Oak postal worker on Nov. 14, 1991.

The killer, Thomas Mellvane, had complained about the management of the Royal Oak facility in which Bate had worked as a supervisor before coming to Farmington.

He temporarily replaced longtime postmaster Ken Harris, who had been under fire and took a disability leave. Bate then worked in Troy. Harris has since retired.

As far as Bate is concerned, he's starting over with an advantage: He knows the staff.

"We've really laid some good ground work," Bate said. "It's an advantage coming back because I know the people. We have an excellent work force." Bate pointed to service improvements, including a 24-hour lobby at the Farmington Hills post office and the creation of a customer's advisory council.

Vagnozzi said that after their initial falling out, he and Bate had been able to resolve some complaints, including the closing of the post offices on Saturday before a Monday holiday.

"I've talked to the employees recently, and they have a good feeling," Vagnozzi said. "The attitude has been more customer friendly."

See POSTMASTER, 4A