

# Farmington Observer

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## Plan would help Hills draw lots



By BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Frustrated Farmington Hills residents have long asked why the city doesn't simply buy property rather than sit back and let it be developed

for objectionable projects.

If voters pass a ballot measure in November, they could get their wish. The Farmington Hills City Council voted unanimously to put the question to the voters of a special land ac-

quisition tax. Taxpayers would pay an additional .5 mills for five years, which would be about \$6 million.

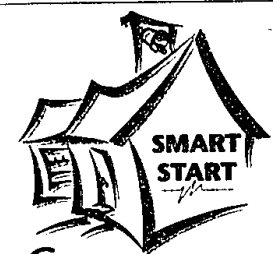
"People are becoming concerned about land use, citizens have spoken out very clearly that they don't want too much density," said councilwoman Nancy Bates, who moved for the vote. "This council is still smarting from some of our court cases."

That all adds up to what the council has been studying for the past two

years and what many residents see as the city's role — to buy odd-shaped lots or land in sensitive residential areas and use it for parks or similar residential developments.

Wixom has adopted a similar program, and voters in scenic Peninsula Township near Traverse City opted for a different tax to control development.

See LOTS, 11A



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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

**Dream come true:** As a youngster, he wanted to be a firefighter. Now he wears the uniform of the Farmington Hills Fire Department. /5A

**Promoting the police:** Four have been added and two promoted by the Farmington Hills Police Department. /5A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

**Glass dealers:** Meet the Goodmans of Wells Cargo who have been saving shoppers money for 17 years by selling glass and tableware. /6A

STREET SCENE

**Good old boys:** Mutha's Day Out has left their mark wherever they tour. They may be a little rowdy, but they're just good old country boys at heart. /8A

TASTE

**Delicious appetizers:** Local cooks impress judges in the Boys English Muffins recipe contest. /1B

SPORTS

**Pickup game:** The Farmington Hills Mercy basketball team hopes to pick up where it left off last season. /1C

**Better prepared:** John Verdura begins his second year as Farmington girls basketball coach with a more experienced team. /1C

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### Hooping it up in the Hills



ASH HEALY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Summer activities: Rich Rosenthal watches as son Matt, 12, shoots baskets at home on Spring Hill in Farmington Hills.

## Subdivision gives beautiful northern exposure

By BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Amid the winding roads, the tasteful mixture of houses on generous lots is set off by boulders, hemlock, birch and Colorado blue spruce in the Heritage Hills/Rolling Oaks subdivision in Farmington Hills.

Between Drake and Farmington on the south side of 14 Mile, the subdivision combines five

**'We looked around and found this was as nice a sub as we'd seen. Our neighbors are real good, everybody takes real good care of their property. It's a nice place to raise a family.'**

Bill Westberg

parcs or common areas with 383 houses on large lots.

"We looked around and found this was as nice a sub as we'd seen," said Bill Westberg, a General Motors executive who moved to his Quaker Way house from Dearborn Heights 15 years ago. "Our neighbors are real good, everybody takes

real good care of their property. It's a nice place to raise a family."

Westberg, his wife and two daughters — one at the University of Michigan and one at Harrison High — have found that the sub is close to shopping, schools and entertainment as well.

Mike Graham, 23, a recent Michi-

gan State University graduate, will be moving into his own apartment, but will miss the "old" neighborhood and the house on Old Timber.

"We moved here 22 years ago," he said while finishing washing his car. "I went to Forest Elementary. Back then the roads were dirt and the street ended here (indicating the intersection in front of his house)."

In fact, residents are so fond of the neighborhood, many of them have been outspoken in their opposition to a proposed cellular phone tower.

See SUBDIVISION, 3A

## Students won't be only new kids on the block

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

A bumper crop of shiny apples is expected to turn up on desktops when Farmington Public Schools open Aug. 30.

More than 50 new teachers are expected to greet students this fall. Before the first bell rung, district officials first wanted to plant the seeds for a successful tenure, presenting a

two-day orientation Tuesday and Wednesday at the Farmington Training Center.

The turnover is unprecedented. "It's kind of been an interesting summer," said district Personnel Director Bob Coleman.

Farmington schools had 26 teachers retire and another 10 go on leave after last school year. The remaining 17 are needed to handle increased en-

rollment, Coleman said.

More than 5,000 people applied for vacancies, which is a fact not lost on those teachers who made the grade.

"I had one tell me how fortunate she felt to be teaching in Farmington," said Superintendent C. Robert Maxfield. "She said, 'I saw this as a place I wanted to end up. Here I am starting here.'"

Farmington school board president

Cathy Webb and Maxfield stressed the expectations of the community and board to the new crew. They also wanted to espouse practical advice.

Staff development coordinator Jerry Fouchey addressed the freshmen class, which includes 15 teachers starting fresh out of college. Others have previous experience ranging from one to 24 years.

See TEACHERS, 4A

### Wedding is showtime

Wendy Marie Johnston and Kenneth W. Pitchford are getting married Sept. 10, and you could almost sell tickets to that wedding. There'll be a ticket booth close at hand, anyway.

The Farmington residents will say "I do" on the stage of the venerable Civic Theater in downtown Farmington. The movie house, a fixture on Grand River since 1940, was chosen for sentimental reasons, according to Johnston.

"That was where we had our first date," she said. "We saw 'Bonnie and Clyde' in July of 1993. We were just friends then, but things developed from there."

There will be "18 or 17" in the wedding party, Johnston said, so it might be a tight fit on the Civic stage. The downtown portion of the split

### FARMINGTON FOCUS

theater seats about 400, she added, and about 230 have been invited.

The Rev. Scott Davis of the Clarenceville United Methodist Church in Livonia will officiate.

The bride graduated from Clarenceville High School and holds an associate's degree in small business management from Schoolcraft College. She's employed by Mueller Dental Arts in Livonia.

The bridegroom is a graduate of Allen Park High School and Michigan State University. He works for Paramount Commercial Interiors in Oak Park.

Their reception will be held in a more tradition-

al setting — a VFW hall in Livonia.

### About 'peaceful parenting'

The Family Education Committee of Farmington Youth Assistance will offer a program on Peaceful Parenting 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 18, at the Farmington Training Center, 33000 Thomas, Farmington.

Peaceful Parenting will cover the need for peacemaking skills, instead of violence, to resolve family conflicts. The program is free, but participants must register in advance by calling Farmington Youth Assistance at 489-3434.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21808 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336; faxed to 477-9722; or dropped off at the newspaper office.