Hills employees honored for 1995

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills City Council chambers were packed for a recent meeting, as city employees were recognized for their years of service and efforts beyond the call of duty.

Personnel Director Dana Whinnery and Director of Public Services Tom Blasell escorted Jane Kroupa of the city's engineering department to the podium and City Engineer Skip Otwell presented her with a bouquet of red roses. Kroupa was named the city's top employee for 1996.

"I feel like I've made a difference," Kroupa said. "I'm honored and grateful."

The clerk typist has been with the city for five years.

She was one of 97 employees honored.

Farmington Hills City Manager Bill Costick read off the names of employees with 5, 10, 15 and 20 years.

"The dream of every city manager is to be some place for 20 years," he said to laughter and applause.

He then recognized six 25-year employees and two 30-year employees, Police Inspectors Richard Niemisto and Tom Godwin. Godwin retired on Jan. 2.

"The service award program has been established as an expression of appreciation for the years of continuous and diligent service by the employees of Farmington Hills," Dwyer said. "It is through their individual and collective efforts that Farmington hills has become one of the most beautiful and innovative communities in Michigan."

Police Chief Bill Dwyer presented the city's Police Officer of the Year award to Sgt. Tim Connor. Connor had received the same honor in 1984, a year when he saved a woman from a fire. In 1995, Connor had led a chase of an armed robbery suspect that resulted in arrest.

"As a result, a dangerous felon was apprehended without incident," Dwyer said.

Chief Rich Marinucci presented Sgt. Dave Chrisco with the 1995 Firefighter of the Year award. Chrisco had been instrumental in two heart attack runs in 1995 and had completed training on his own to become a state licensed paramedic.

"We don't require that level of training," Marinucci said.

County Commissioner David Moffitt presented proclamations from the county commission to Kroupa, Connor and Chrisco.

"You just can't say enough about people who care for others," he said. "You (Connor and Chrisco) put your life on the line for strangers."

The city recognized six outstanding employees for their contributions in 1995.

JoAnn King, administrative assistant to Police Chief Bill Dwyer, was recognized for her efforts for the department, including the first golf classic to benefit spouses and families of deceased officers. King had been named the city's Employee of the Year in 1991.

Mary Kay Miles, a crime prevention technician, was recognized for her contributions during the day and for her help with the police open house, 10K run for Muscular Dystrophy and golf outing.

David Moser, a Department of Public Works employee, was recognized for his emergency response work and work on the "Rouge Rescue" program. Moser was also the 1994 "Snow Fighter of the Year."

Elsie Price, who works with the parks and recreation department, was recognized for the second-straight year for her work with children during hay rides at Heritage Park and other programs as well as her landscaping and equipment maintenance.

Susan Steinberg of the personnel department was recognized for her "excellent people skills."

David Tietmeyer, the video producer for the city since 1985, was recognized for his work on many evenings, "mostly Monday nights."

■ Susan Steinberg of the personnel department was recognized for her 'excellent people skills.'

Volunteers sought for president's forum

BY JANICE TIGAR-KRAMER
SPECIAL WRITER

Some 800 spirited volunteers — including many from Oakland County — will be on hand May 18-25 when the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities meets at the Westin Hotel in Detroit.

The conference — "Investing In Ability" — is expected to draw more than 3,000 business, labor, government and disability advocates from the U.S. and Canada. It is Detroit's first-ever president's conference on disability concerns.

"Our focus is on the ability not the disability of workers," said Patrick Cannon, executive director of Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns.

Cannon said the conference will help dispel the myth that people with disabilities are costly to employ, injured more often on the job and absent more often than other workers.

While conference-goers attend some 60 workshops aimed at promoting the employment of people with disabilities, volunteers will help run the 49th annual event, said Frank Hazard, volunteer committee co-chair and executive director of Southfield-based Kenny Rehab.

Oakland County business people interested in joining the volunteer effort during the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities may call Kenny Rehab, (810) 552-0202, or the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns, (800) SAY-ABLE.

President Bill Clinton is expected to attend the national conference, Hazard said.

Kenny Rehab, a Michigan advocate for people with disabilities, and the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns are vigorously recruiting volunteers from Oakland businesses that can spare "one or 100 workers," Hazard said.

■ 'Everyone in the community benefits from being part of this event. We all want to make a difference, and it's fun to be part of a team that shows off Detroit in a good light.'

Frank Hazard

Volunteer duties will run the gamut — assist conference- goers from Detroit Metro Airport to the Westin, provide directions and information, escort attendees to workshops and act as "runners" for workshop facilitators. Volunteers will work at least one four-hour shift during the conference, which runs 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day.

Hazard said more than half the conference goers will be in wheelchairs and many are hearing or visually impaired.

"Everyone in the community benefits from being part of this event," he said. "We all want to make a difference, and it's fun to be part of a team that shows off Detroit in a good light."

In addition to the satisfaction gleaned from assisting conference-goers, Hazard said, volunteers may attend any workshop at no charge.

Workshops will cover a range of topics, including innovative ways to accommodate disabled employees, how to implement and enforce the Americans With Disabilities Act, and how to interview and hire disabled workers. Several workshops will be run by disabled employees who are enjoying successful careers.

"We need to get the message out that a worker with a disability doesn't mean he or she can't work — it's a myth," said Hazard, citing a 1985 Harris Poll that revealed two-thirds of disabled Americans are unemployed or under-employed.

Prior to the conference, volunteers will be required to attend a few hours of sensitivity training. Day, evening and Saturday classes will be available in several Oakland County locations, primarily in areas with the greatest number of volunteers.

The conference also includes a two-day meeting of the National Association of Governors' Committees for People with Disabilities.

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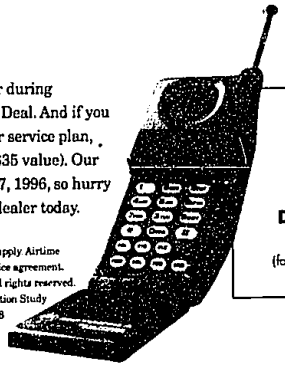

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