

# Distinguished Citizen 'a giver'

BY DAVE VARGA

STAFF WRITER

Robert Heinrich is "a giver, not a taker."

Giving his time and talents to a long list of community groups and activities earned Heinrich the "Distinguished Citizen Award" presented by the Farmington Area Jaycees at a community leadership prayer breakfast Tuesday morning.

Jaycees board Chairman Mark Blasiola cited Heinrich's background before presenting the honor, noting leadership roles with the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, the Farmington Downtown Development Authority, Exchange Club, Farmington Philharmonic, Farmington Com-

munity Foundation for Children, Youth and Families and more.

"Yes, Robert Heinrich is a true definition of the distinguished citizen of the year," Blasiola said. The honor wasn't his alone, Heinrich said. He pointed to the others in the community who do plenty to keep the Farmington area a great place to live. "I accept this award really as a representative of those people," he said.

Heinrich's beliefs shape his

**'This community is certainly a wonderful place and it's only because of the actions of a lot of good people.'**

**Robert Heinrich**  
—community activist

work in community. "Government cannot and should not do everything for us," he said. "As you look around, this community is certainly a wonderful place and it's only because of the actions of a lot of good people."

For his personal inspiration, though, Heinrich pointed to his parents in the audience: "I learned at a very early age what it meant to be involved in the community because they were involved in their community."

Former Farmington councilwoman Shirley Richardson provided a few personal insights into Heinrich, who is president of Metrobank in Farmington Hills. She referred to his fine, dark suits, his frugality, his ability to keep his composure and his fine speaking ability.

One saying fits him well, Richardson said, "Blessed is the man who does not speak until he knows what he is talking about."

After this accolade, Heinrich returned to the podium to add a touch of humor.

"If I had known all these people would say all these kind words, I would have acted more favorably on their loan requests."



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LAMBLIN

Busy banker: After his honor Tuesday, Robert Heinrich wore his boutonniere at his job as president of Metrobank in Farmington Hills.

## Hills takes aim at overweight trucks

BY WILLIAM COUTANT

STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills is taking steps to improve its local roads regardless of what happens at the state level.

By a 6-0 vote, with Councilman Terry Sover absent, the Hills city council Monday introduced an ordinance amendment that will allow the city to use its own police to enforce vehicle weight restrictions on any road in the city.

The ordinance, which is set for final action May 19 at the council's regular meeting, will allow police to weigh trucks and fine them if they are overweight. Part of the money would cover the police department and court costs of the process and the rest would go to improve roads.

"I think we all know what condition our roads are in," said Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer. "This would be a real plus for the city. Some of the vehicles

traveling the roads are far overweight."

Dwyer said there has not been a single weight enforcement citation issued in the city in 13 years, other than after an accident or other violation because the city has lacked the equipment, training and local authority to enforce weight restrictions.

"Owners (of the trucks) know there is little enforcement," said Patrol Division Commander Dennis Rochford. "Many drivers actually come to the police department because they don't want to drive these unsafe vehicles."

The ordinance would exempt fire department vehicles, department of public works vehicles, school buses and refuse haulers driving within the city.

Rochford said motor carrier enforcement was part of the department's five-year plan of 1994-95. Enforcement would:

- Reduce damage to local and

- state roads.

- Enhance traffic safety.

- Make sure commercial drivers are properly licensed.

- And provide money to the city for road repairs.

The ordinance sets fines based on the amount a vehicle is overweight. Enforcement requires about \$52,000 in startup costs to buy a vehicle and portable scales, and to train two of the department's traffic officers.

No additional officers would be added to the force unless the operation justifies it and money from violations covers the additional cost.

City Attorney John Donohue also recommended, and the council approved, another ordinance regulating the operation of trucks and other vehicles so that safety violations, other than weight, could also be enforced.

"Those violations become readily apparent," Donohue said. "There are advantages to having local ordinances regulating both."

Dwyer said although state law already governs those areas, state police do not have the manpower to enforce them.

Several communities in the area, including Ann Arbor, Canton, Northville, Plymouth Township, Taylor, Westland and Wyandotte already have motor carrier enforcement in place. Dearborn has had a program since 1925.

So far, Troy and Royal Oak are the only Oakland County communities with local laws for motor carrier enforcement.

Councilwoman Vicki Barnett said she would like to see commercial waste haulers also required to abide by weight limits.

Tom Blasiol, the city's director of public services, said that might alter the equipment the city's contracted waste hauler uses, and would raise rates for the city.

Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said he was concerned about the city enforcing weight limits on commercial carriers but not on its own (DPW, fire trucks) vehicles

or the school's (buses).

Rochford said because of the design, capacity and normal operation of those vehicles, they would not be able to meet the same weight restrictions.

City Manager Dan Hobbs suggested that money from fines not be strictly earmarked for road repairs, because it would limit the city's ability to spend money where it is needed most.

But council members were unanimous in wanting it set aside for road improvements.

"We want this money to be dedicated and accounted for," said Councilman Jon Grant.

"We need this," Mayor Vagnozzi said. "The roads are being torn up. How do you protect them if you don't fix them?"

In other action, the council:

- Approved an amendment to the city's pension plan that will allow the employee contribution to the plan not to be taxed.

The employee contributions, amounting to 3.5 percent of their salaries, had been taxed. There would be no additional cost to the city for the change.

- Discussed a policy regarding political activities in city-owned buildings.

The city has allowed candidate forums at the city hall and fundraisers at the city's golf course and parks in the past.

- Discussed a policy regarding city contributions to non-profit organizations.

The city contributed about \$3,000 to non-profits this past year and the proposed policy would limit those contributions to \$5,000, said Assistant City Manager Dave Call.

Those contributions would not include money indirectly given to non-profits, he said. The Baptist Manor and the Haven have received Community Development Block Grant money through the city. That process would not change, he said.

The council asked for a clearer policy.

- Canceled the May 26 regular meeting due to the Memorial Day holiday.

### CLARIFICATION

A story on plans for a new Super Kmart and other developments in the Orchard Lake/14 Mile/Northwestern roads area in Sunday's Farmington Observer-

er should have said plans also call for 172 single-family attached condominiums or 400 apartment units.

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