



Sign up: Livonia Mayor Jack Kirksey, left, joins John Nagy, Livonia planning director; Edward Hodges, Botsford Hospital board chairman, Jon Grant, Farmington Hills mayor pro-tem; and Eight Mile Boulevard Association Chairman Gerson Cooper, Botsford Hospital president at the sign marking the city limit between Livonia and Farmington Hills.

Looking good

Eight Mile beautification investment becomes a bridge between communities

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
STAFF WRITER

Visual enhancements along Eight Mile Road in Farmington Hills and other communities mean more than road beautification.

"I think it represents investment in the community," said Jonathan Grant, Farmington Hills city councilman and chair of the Eight Mile Boulevard Association (EMBA), the organization which recently raised funds for physical improvements along the east-west corridor.

"It represents a commitment to improving the area," Grant said.

EMBA, in its fourth year, exists to refashion the image of the 27-mile thoroughfare, historically considered a divisive boundary between Detroit and the northern suburbs.

EMBA members include businesses, neighborhood groups, the Department of Transportation and the three counties and 13 communities surrounding Eight Mile.

As part of the association's current mission to improve the road's physical appearance, eight median signs denoting community boundaries, includ-

ing one in Farmington Hills, and 20 perennial gardens went up in mid-September.

Farmington Hills shares its new sign, east of Grand River and west of Renaissance, with the City of Livonia.

Representing the Farmington area, Grant, Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi and Gerson Cooper, president of Botsford General Hospital, which picked up the cost of the sign, met Sept. 30 with Livonia's Mayor Jack Kirksey and planning director John Nagy at the sign site.

"We are happy to be a part of the effort to restore Eight Mile Road to its previous status as the major thoroughfare to three counties," Vagnozzi said. "It means that we are actively working with our major city, Detroit, as they revitalize their community."

The monument style signs are dark green with white lettering and gold and light green accents. Made of brushed aluminum, they have a contemporary look and are considered extremely durable.

In addition to landscaping each new sign location, EMBA planted several other median gardens of various sizes and

styles along the road.

While perennials, such as day lilies and roses, fill most of the gardens and will not surface until next year, some areas received Austrian Pines, hostas and other greenery.

EMBA members, project donors and community leaders will celebrate the project and dedicate signs Oct. 14 in East-pointe.

"I think this effort is especially important because it involves so many communities," said Farmington Mayor Joanne McShane. "This signifies communities working together to be the best they can be."

The cost of the entire project, which will result in 10 more Eight Mile signs, is \$430,000. Although EMBA has raised more than \$350,000 through local, state, corporate and foundation grants, it needs \$72,000 and nine more sign sponsors to complete the project.

"(Eight Mile Road) can either be a border or it can be a bridge," Vagnozzi said. "I think we're more and more seeing it as a bridge."

Merchants prepare for howling good time at Halloween event

BY BECKY BURNS
STAFF WRITER

Becky Thomas handed out more than 2,000 pieces of candy last Halloween.

Dressed as Little Red Riding Hood - with her husband, Carl, as the Big Bad Wolf - Thomas stood in front of Sports Image, the shop their family owns on Grand River Avenue, indulging hundreds of little goblins and ghouls as they trick-or-treated their way through downtown Farmington.

And she's getting ready to do it again this year.

Oct. 26 marks the fourth annual Downtown Farmington Holiday Fun Fest, an afternoon of candy collecting, costume contests, pony rides, puppets, a petting zoo and even a free movie, "Count Yorga - Vampire."

Signs advertising the event, sponsored by the Farmington Downtown Development Authority, are already popping up in store windows, along with those inviting trick-or-treaters to stop by.

Judy Downey, director of the authority, says she expects about three-quarters of the downtown merchants, and 2,000 or so children and adults, will participate in the festivities.

Not only does the Fun Fest give costumed kids a chance to

Fest fun planned at familiar haunts

Downtown Farmington Halloween Fun Fest schedule includes:

- 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Trick-or-treating in the downtown shops. Bring your own bag. Children must be accompanied by adults.
- 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Petting zoo and pony rides; Moonwalk trampoline.
- 12:30 p.m. Movie: "Count Yorga - Vampire," the Civic Theatre.
- 1:30 p.m. Puppet show: The Boo Brothers!
- 2 p.m. Children's Costume Contest for kids up to age 12. Registration under the big tent until 1:30 p.m.
- 3 p.m. Pet Costume Contest.
- 3:30 p.m. Movie: "Count Yorga - Vampire," the Civic Theatre.

All events will take place in and around the downtown Farmington shopping plaza, one block east of Grand River Avenue and Farmington Road. And all are free.

stock up on candy, Downey says, it also offers parents some peace of mind. "People seem to feel very comfortable bringing their

children out trick-or-treating during the day." In fact, she says, after Fun Fest, many parents don't take their young children out at all on Halloween night.

"It's the perfect opportunity for them to have fun and show off their costumes in the daylight," Thomas said.

If merchants don't have enough staff power to run their businesses and satisfy little sweet teeth at the same time, Downey says the authority will furnish costumed volunteers to pass out candy for them that afternoon.

"It's hectic, but it's a great experience for downtown," Downey says.

Thomas agrees. "We don't do much business that day, and that's OK," she says. "Some people have complained about it - 'Too many people.' But...the visibility, what more can you ask for?"

She credits the Halloween Fun Fest with bringing new business to her shop in past years. "Sure enough, that next Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday, that whole week we'll have new faces in the store."

Plus, Thomas says, "It just makes you feel so good to see so many people out and about and enjoying a small town."

AGENDAS

Study session
Farmington Hills
City Council
City Council Chambers
474-6115
7:45 p.m. Monday, Oct. 6

Special meeting
Farmington
Board of Education
Lewis Schulman Building
489-3300
8:15 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 7

Agenda items include:

■ Request for closed session regarding pending negotiations according to Open Meetings Act.

Study session
Farmington
Board of Education
Lewis Schulman Building
489-3300
7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 7

Agenda items include:
■ Recognitions of Greg Boothroyd, North Farmington High; FFS Model Program; Stu-

dent Assistance Program chairs and Steering Committee representatives.

■ Legislative update from Sen. Willis Bullard;
■ Preview of Plante and Moran presentation;
■ Evaluation reports on Farmington High restructuring; Adventure Challenge program; and Micro-computer based lab for Harrison High physics.
■ Follow up on superintendent/school board retreat.
■ Award natural gas bid

Hart Schaffner & Marx Johnston & Murphy

fall/winter 1997 collection show

Wednesday, October 8
4 pm to 8 pm
Men's

Select from our in-stock collection of Hart Schaffner & Marx suits, sportcoats and trousers, or order a garment made to your measure. Finish your look with footwear from Johnston & Murphy. Choose from the season's most up-to-date styles, many of which will be seen only at this show.

Representatives will be available to assist with your selections.

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Hills man guilty in murder

A Farmington Hills man was convicted last week of murder during a 1996 armored car robbery.

Perry Daniel Hollie, 24, was convicted of charges including murder with a firearm, bank robbery and conspiracy following a week long jury trial in federal district court in Ann Arbor.

On the night of Nov. 13, 1996, Hollie and Matthew Girardin, 29, of Garden City were working as armored car guards for Michigan National Bank. Girardin was fatally shot as the two men arrived at the Michigan National Bank on Michigan Avenue in Dearborn.

"At the time of the shooting Mr. Hollie told police that a lone gunman walked up to Matthew Girardin and shot him as he was leaving the van, and that Hollie then ran to a nearby Rally's Restaurant to call for help," said U.S. Attorney Saul Green.

An ATM video tape was retrieved from the bank's lobby and played during the trial. The tape showed the arrival of the van at the bank but showed the Girardin never exited the vehicle and Hollie was the only person seen on the tape.

Testimony from the medical examiner was that Girardin was killed by a contact wound - a wound caused by a gun placed directly against the victim's head and fired.

Other expert witnesses testified that based on blood evidence found inside the armored van, the fatal shot had been fired from the driver's seat and that Girardin was killed inside the vehicle, not ambushed outside as Hollie had originally reported.

Hollie and his cousin, Commit Rowson III, stole nearly \$1.2 million from the cargo area of the armored van, according to Green. A week after the murder and robbery, Rowson killed himself in a Warren motel after a shootout with FBI agents. Almost all of the stolen money was recovered from the motel room.

The case was investigated by Dearborn Police, the FBI, Michigan State Police and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

No sentencing date has been set for Hollie who faces a maximum penalty of two consecutive mandatory life terms in prison and/or a \$250,000 fine. Hollie remains incarcerated.

2 more teens enter guilty pleas in golf course vandalism case

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Two teens have entered guilty pleas to charges of malicious destruction of property and illegal entry in the vandalism at San Marino Golf Course April 2-4.

Damage at the Farmington Hills municipal course involved golf carts, a sprinkler system, a shed and a truck and totaled \$50,000, which the city is seeking from those already sentenced.

Dave Miller, 19, of Farmington and David Gaydek, 18, of Farmington Hills will be sentenced by Oakland County Circuit Court

Judge Barry Howard at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 16. The prosecutor will likely ask for probation, with a provision for restitution.

"They have entered a plea to the court for probation and restitution. In return for that, we've dismissed the conspiracy count," said Jonathan Covault, Oakland County prosecuting attorney.

Three others charged have applied for Youthful Trainee Act status, meaning the offenses could be cleared from their records if they successfully complete probation.

"If someone was to be on

Youthful Trainee Act status, it's like you're on probation," Covault said. "You can make restitution a condition of your YTA status."

Five teens initially charged in the case were also granted Youthful Trainee Status.

They received three years probation after pleading guilty to two counts of MDOF over \$100 and one count of illegal entry.

Two of those teens were also sentenced to 90 days in Oakland County Jail, which was to be suspended upon successful completion of probation.