

Growth from page A7

ton Observer editor from 1985-90.

The city had 55,000 residents in 1973; today, there are 88,000.

Growth gave way to other changes. Among the most significant was a highly respected parks and recreation program.

"Farmington Hills is known as a high-quality residential community with a great parks system," Sklar said.

Filling the gap

In fact, Assistant City Manager Steve Brock sees the acquisition of parkland and recreational offerings as the single most significant improvement in Farmington Hills during the last two and half decades.

"Improvements made to the park system and recreation land and public property has been enormous and filled a huge gap in the services being offered," Brock said.

Since 1973, the city acquired Heritage Park, Woodland Hills, Pioneer Park and Founders Sports Park, where the city built an ice arena. The city also bought Mercy Center from the Sisters of Mercy and converted it into an activity center, now known as the William Costick Activities Center, which houses recreational activities, the senior adult program, as well as

■ In the early years of cityhood, it wasn't unusual to see horseback riders jaunt down the road. Horses, however, were replaced by parking lots full of cars jamming roads that weren't yet prepared to accommodate the increase.

a variety of events throughout the year.

Last year, voters ensured the life of these entities, and more, by extending a 10-year parks and recreation millage.

More people also fueled public safety needs, Brock said. And city officials responded to that by adding four new fire stations and a police station. Last year, Fire Station No. 5 opened with 24-hour service, and this year the city also established the Advanced Life Support service reducing the response time significantly for life

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Key player: Former Farmington Hills Mayor and local historian Jean Fox will present the keynote address during the official birthday ceremony at noon Saturday, June 27, at Heritage Park near the picnic shelter. The event will also honor residents over age 100 and who have lived here the longest; history contest winners and the Farmington Hills Economic Development Corporation's business award winners.

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