

Franchise renewal: It's time to express your opinions

Here at SWOCC, we've been working on the cable franchise renewal process with Time Warner. The renewal process gives every one of us the opportunity to learn more about how cable can serve as a community communications tool in addition to just being a way to receive TV signals. The renewal process also allows us to give our input on cable's performance (past, present and future).

Earlier this month, SWOCC hosted focus group sessions at the INFO TV-12 studio. Members of the Buske Group (Dirk Koning and Rika Welsh) conducted the focus groups. The Buske Group is a national consulting firm that aids cities and access operations with cable franchising.

Buske Group Consultant Dirk

Koning, who is also executive director for the Grand Rapids Community Media Center, told participants that "Future trends in the industry foresee cable as being a multi-media provider, to include voice, video and data."

"There are a lot of cable companies that are looking to upgrade their systems to include local and long distance telephone services as well as high-speed Internet access," Koning said. "Cable has the potential to deliver between five and ten megabits per second as opposed to 28.8



CAREN COLLINS
—SWOCC executive director

kilobits per second."

Because of digital integration made possible by fiber optic lines, some cable companies are planning to integrate TV and the Internet. So, while you're watching "NYPD Blue" on one part of the screen, you would be able to research information on their Web site, or participate in a chat group about the program on the other part of the TV screen. Progressive communities and cable companies also are looking for ways to share new services with residents for social applications as well. Communities that have an Institutional Network (I-Net) allow schools, non-profit organizations and governments to do shared programming with voice, video and data over a separate cable connection.

For example, all fire stations

in Grand Rapids have I-Net. This means people at every station can view a closed-circuit video training at the same time. This saves costs in transporting fire fighters to one place for training as well as added safety benefits because they remain close to their fire trucks.

In the Farmington Public School System, I-Net allows students from all three high schools to participate in the same Japanese and German language classes via closed circuit TV. Equity in curriculum and time saved in transportation of the children make this worthwhile. Schools high schools even run homework hot lines on their educational access channels. Teachers are in the studio receiving phone calls from students at home. They give advice on Web

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Caren Collins
—SWOCC executive director

sites to get the information. Sometimes the Web sites are brought up "live" on the channel for students who don't have access to the Internet.

With major advances in technology, the possibilities are endless. We thank those who partic-

ipated in these focus groups because we need your comments as to how best to serve your wants.

The new franchise agreement will extend into the next century. This is the time to express your concerns and comments.

Let us know what's important to you regarding your current cable service and potential future services.

You can call, write or e-mail us at SWOCC. The telephone number is (248) 473-7266. Our address is 24021 Research Drive, Farmington Hills, MI 48335. Our e-mail address is collins@ci.farmington-hills.mi.us

Caren Collins is the executive director for the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission.

FARMINGTON RECREATION NEWS

Each week, the Recreation Division of Farmington Hills' Department of Special Services presents a synopsis of upcoming activities. For further information regarding programs, contact the recreation office at 473-9570. Pre-registration is required for most activities. For matters regarding Farmington Hills City Council agenda items, call the news line at 473-9532.

DINNER SHOW

Enjoy an evening of captivating stories from around the world, told by Adam Mellem. His words will bring stories to life in a fascinating way. The event will take place 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25, at the Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills. Fee is \$9 for adults and \$6 for children younger than 12.

DAY CAMP

Week long camp runs 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily Feb. 16-18 at Heritage Park Day Camp. A field trip is included. The cost is \$80 per per-

son. Pre-registration is required. Ages 6-12.

ADULT SOFTBALL

The City of Farmington Hills is accepting new adult team registration for Men's, Women's and Co-ed Softball. Registration is based on a first-come, first-served basis. Leagues will play one night per week. For fees and nights of play call 473-9570.

OPEN GYM

You can exercise at the Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills. Choose from Adult Basketball: 7:30-9:30 p.m. Thursdays and 9-11 a.m. Sundays; Teen Basketball: 9-11 p.m. Saturdays and 1-3 p.m. Sundays; Adult Volleyball: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sundays; Family Gym & Swim: 12:30-3 p.m. Saturdays. Cost to participate for residents 17 and younger is \$2, nonresidents \$4. Residents 18 and over \$3 and \$5 for nonresidents. Call 473-9570.

PUBLIC SKATING

Ice skating at Founders Sports Park is available: 7-8:50 p.m. Tuesday and Friday; noon to 1:50 p.m. Saturday; and 3:30-6:20 p.m. Sunday. \$3.50 residents and \$6 nonresidents.

ADULT SKATING SESSION

Ages: 16 years and older, 8:30-10:20 p.m. Saturdays. \$3.50 residents and \$6 for nonresidents.

DROP-IN HOCKEY

Drop-in hockey will be 11 p.m. to 12:50 a.m. every Saturday. Fee \$7. Ages 16 and up. Full hockey gear must be worn, including helmets. Under 18 years of age, face mask must be worn. ID required.

STICK HANDLING

Stick-handling sessions will be 11 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. every Tuesday and Friday. Helmets required for all. Practice puck handling and passing skills.

SHELTER RESERVATIONS

Farmington Hills and Farmington residents can reserve the

canopy or the Heritage Park shelters starting Monday, Feb. 1, at the Recreation office. You must pay rent and deposit when you reserve. Call 473-9570 for shelter capacity and fees.

SWIM LESSONS

Lessons from parent/tot to adults are available beginning the week of Feb. 22 at the Costick Activities Center pool. The pool's temperature is 86 degrees. The session will run for seven classes. A \$35 pre-registration fee is required at the Recreation Office.

EUCHRE

Sign up as an individual or as a team for an evening of playing euchre at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 19. Refreshments and prizes are included as part of the \$12 per team or \$6 per person fee. The program will be at the Heritage Park Visitor Center. Pre-registration is required.

Pet-A-Pet program needs you

The Pet-A-Pot animal visitation program offers you and your family pet an opportunity to start the new year by bringing happiness to others. Volunteers with the group make monthly visits to schools, nursing homes, hospitals and hospices all over the metro area.

Pet-A-Pet has been active in the metro area for over 10 years and was recently the focus of an extensive journalistic effort by photographer and author Renee Esordi from San Diego, Calif. Esordi is compiling a book on pet therapy and spent two weeks with Pet-A-Pet, taking over 100 photographs. She returned to the area for Christmas and is hopeful that the book will be published sometime in August.

Volunteer openings are available in several facilities, including the latest addition, the Lutheran Home of Livonia.

Pets should be friendly and well behaved, and must have current vaccination records. There is a \$5 membership fee. Visits are scheduled once a month and usually last about one hour. If you are interested in volunteering contact:

■ Botsford Continuing Health Center

10 a.m. the second Saturday of the month

Estelle (734) 464-9005

■ American House

10 a.m. the second Saturday of the month

Anita (248) 471-3695

■ McAulley Center

10 a.m. the second Tuesday of the month

Cathy (248) 349-7185

■ Greenery Extended Care Center

10:30 a.m. the 1st Wednesday of the month

Lori (313) 533-0222

WINTER SPECIALS

Firefighters Laser Eye Surgery
\$2,999! both eyes

LASIK Vision Correction is now available in Farmington Hills!



Thousands of people have traveled outside the United States to experience the life-changing miracle of LASIK vision correction. This painless, proven procedure can permanently correct nearsightedness, astigmatism, and hyperopia.

The Farmington Laser Eye Center now brings Michigan's most advanced LASIK eye facility to you! Dr. Donald C. Fander, the center's Medical Director, is the most experienced practitioner of LASIK eye surgery in Michigan.

Here's what a few clear-visioned friends have to say:

I wore hard contacts since 1971. I could not even drive without corrective lenses before LASIK. After surgery my eyes adjusted very easily, and my vision is steadily improving. It is wonderful!
Mrs. Jean K. Weston
Kindergarten Teacher



I wore glasses all my life, and trifocals for the last 12 years. I was 20 X 350 in one eye! Now I can get by all day without glasses. My 21-year-old daughter is going to see Dr. Fander for LASIK as soon as possible!
Pierre Knorr
School Psychologist

Special Note for Firefighters!

Some firefighters have health coverage for laser vision correction. Contact your benefits manager for more information.

The first 1,000 patients who schedule a consultation will receive LASIK surgery on both eyes for only \$2,999 - regularly \$4,400! Includes pre- and post-operative visits.

Time	Cost
1st 1,000 patients	\$2,999
Others	\$4,400

Call today for details.

888-747-I-SEE
(888-747-4733)



Farmington Laser Eye Center
30160 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 100
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
Visit our Web Site at <http://www.lasikdetroit.com>

WINTER SPECIALS

LOVE makes the difference...



The Woodhaven Retirement Community Caregiving Staff

...and we love our Residents!

"You really are a haven for my Mom, M. K., I can't thank you enough."

A.E. - Plymouth
"I have been a physician for 18 years and...the environment at Woodhaven is unsurpassed in both its home-like atmosphere and the impeccable cleanliness of the building, rooms and grounds. Whenever I am asked for a recommendation, Woodhaven will definitely be at the top of the list!"

Dr. M.M. - Livonia
"Words can not express my gratitude to all of you at Woodhaven. I know my Mother received the best care there. Please know your love to your Residents does not go unnoticed."

L.S. - Farmington Hills
"Thank you for the loving care Mom received at your wonderful facility from your dedicated Staff."

D.R. - Farmington Hills
"Please accept our appreciation for the sincerity of purpose your Staff demonstrated when ministering

to Mom's needs. These words do not adequately define our feelings towards you and your people...who have left a positive, indelible impression."

D.T. - Northville
"There are no words that can tell you all that a wonderful job you do. Your Staff has always been so cheerful...careful and understanding."

K. & A.H. - Livonia
"The dedicated people of Woodhaven shine by offering themselves unequivocally - their talents, their labor and their love."

J.W. and M. & B.R. - Brighton
"On keeping with the holistic values of your mission, you made Mickey's return from the hospital both comfortable and reassuring. Thank you for the many smiling faces of your very hospitable Staff."

F.M. - Redford

WOODHAVEN
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
29667 Wentworth Ave., Livonia, MI 48154-3256
(734) 261-9000

ADULT DAY CARE.....\$3-\$4 per hour
(Subsidies available through The Senior Alliance)
INDEPENDENT LIVING with meals,
transportation, housekeeping
and activities.....\$1,200 per month*
(*under construction - opening March 1, 1999)
ASSISTED LIVING
(including Alzheimer's).....\$1,800
SPECIAL CARE
(advanced Alzheimer's).....\$2,200