

Residents get MDOT's attention on I-275 noise

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

Despite winning a small 11th hour victory in the I-275 noise battle, it still remains to be seen whether northwest Farmington Hills residents will win the war. "At least we finally got their attention," Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said Monday, referring to the Michigan Department of Transportation.

"There's a strong neighborhood group working on it." Homeowners in the Meadowbrook and Livonia Hills subdivisions have been particularly vocal about the freeway noise. A Noise Abatement Committee recently attempted and failed in their bid to have the reconstruction made of asphalt instead of concrete. Vagnozzi was among four city council members heading a meeting of Northwest Farmington Hills residents Monday, at which the noise and other road construction issues were discussed.

MDOT officials have said a sound study will be done once the project is done. Noise levels along the freeway have been measured as high as 91 decibels.

Reconstruction along six miles of I-275 is tentatively scheduled to begin within two weeks. The southbound lanes will be finished first, then the northbound ones. Farmington Hills residents living along the stretch of highway have been particularly vocal in asking that their concerns about noise be addressed. So far MDOT has agreed to look at alternative timing or freeway grading and to meet with the residents along with the city.

Skip Obwell, Farmington Hills city engineer, updated the residents about the reconstruction and noise issues. Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has asked us to monitor (freeway noise) with our sound person," Obwell said. The sound study will be conducted by the consulting firm Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade and Douglas Inc. MDOT officials have said a sound study will be done once the project is done. Noise levels along the freeway have been measured as high as 91 decibels. The state has decided to reconstruct the expressway with concrete rather than asphalt. There has been debate about which material causes more tire noise. Many residents have complained that concrete emits more noise

than asphalt. Obwell said MDOT had to consider "life cycle costing" — or what material would be more economical over the long run. Concrete was ruled to be the better choice, he said. Obwell also updated residents about the M-6 Haggerty connector, which links I-275 and I-696. The roughly six-mile stretch of highway is scheduled to open by July 4, he said.

Farmington Hills City Manager Steve Brock updated residents on the city's progress in the Y2K problem. So far, 65 percent of the city's systems are Y2K compliant, 25 percent are unaffected and 10 percent are being studied further.

The biggest city-provided service affected by computers will be the 911 service, which is slated for replacement this year, he said.

Some analysts predict that when the year 2000 strikes, some computers will read the date as 1900 — which could

wreak havoc with banking and credit accounts, food expiration dates and more.

The city has published two brochures about the potential problem. One answers commonly asked questions about Y2K and the other offers planning tips. Both list phone numbers and web site addresses for the state of Michigan, Ameritech, Detroit Edison, Consumers Energy and Detroit Water & Sewer.

Copper Creek condominiums resident Charles Gumushian said he was drawn to the meeting because he wanted to learn more about the road construction projects.

"I thought that (the agenda) was rather aggressive," Gumushian said. "I got quite a bit out of it."

Vagnozzi said each quadrant gets an annual meeting with the city.

"The purpose is just to bring local government closer to the neighborhoods," he said.

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Arts Commission announces winners

The Farmington Area Arts Commission is has announced the winners of the 14th Annual Contest for High School Artists

of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Suzanne Stiles, art instructor with Walled Lake Schools, judged the entries.

In the category of Three Dimensional Art, the first prize was awarded to Brynn Maki of Farmington High School, second prize was given to Lauren Lankes of North Farmington High School and third prize went to Heather Friedli of Farmington High School.

Honorable mention awards were earned by Nina Bianchi of North Farmington High School, Akil Dawkins of Farmington High School, Lindsay Dusek of Farmington High School, Heather Froman of Farmington High School, Lisa Illene Grentzel of Farmington High School, Christine Herrmann of Farmington Alternative Academy, Melissa Holihan of Mercy High School, Maryn Link of Farmington High School, Heather Mall-

Awards will be presented at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 25, at the William Costick Activities Center, 28600 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills.

nowski of Farmington High School and Maria Starling of Farmington High School.

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Winning art will be displayed at the Farmington Community Library, downtown branch, during April and at the Farmington Festival of the Arts April 25-May 2 at the William Costick Activities Center.

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