

Knollenberg talks roads with council

BY TIM SMITH
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This time, U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg came to Farmington to talk with the city council instead of meeting local officials at his Washington, D.C. office.

During an hour-long get-together prior to the regular Farmington City Council meeting April 6, the Bloomfield Hills Republican, council members and City Manager Frank Lauhoff discussed three issues likely on the minds of many people in Farmington and Farmington Hills — roads, cable television and an aging sanitary sewer system.

"I really like to do this on a regular basis," Knollenberg said after the session. "These are my constituents, too."

FARMINGTON

Local telecommunications concerns — cable franchising, cable rates and the need for federal regulation similar to other utilities — topped the agenda.

In the Farmington-Farmington Hills area, cable rates keep escalating because Time Warner is the only game in town.

"Satellite companies also cannot access local channels. That forces consumers with satellite reception dishes to hook up to cable for all viewing options."

"As far as things we're concerned about go, certainly one of them is the cable issue," said Councilman James Mitchell. "We're going through the re-franchising (of Time Warner) right now. We try to explain that we're having problems dealing with (lack of) competition."

"We need help from Congress in terms of opening up some competition."

Knollenberg told the city officials that two pending federal bills potentially would allow direct competition from satellite companies.

"If there's not going to be rate regulation, the next best thing is competition," Lauhoff said.

Road repairs in another subject drawing much discussion. Knollenberg said Gov. John Engler, in 1997, asked for \$200 million for the road program.

But Knollenberg said more than \$300 million was actually approved.

prated, and "in the well" for much-needed road repairs.

"So that's the good news," Knollenberg said. "Now it's a case of getting that money into projects."

Also during the session, Knollenberg

Road repairs is another subject drawing much discussion. Knollenberg said Gov. John Engler, in 1997, asked for \$200 million for the road program.

Knollenberg told the officials, "We will continue to work with you on that."

"(The system) is collecting infiltration from underground," Lauhoff said later. "We had flooding (in 1998), problems with capacity."

"We're asking for the federal government to give us a hand, give the whole county a hand," Lauhoff said.

At the beginning of the subsequent regular council meeting, Knollenberg thanked the council for giving him the chance to "spend time on topics of concern to everybody in this room."

"Last year, (the council) went to Washington, D.C.," Mitchell said after the meeting. "It was rushed, we only



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLEY

Under construction: Area residents face detours and delays with the opening of road construction season. Currently, the northbound M-5 entrance ramp at Grand River west of Halstead is closed.

had a half-hour meeting. Here, it's much better. He (has) just us as an audience."

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WALLED LAKE

30655 Decker Road, Novi. Residents living in Novi with a 48377 zip code should use the new precinct, No. 10, instead of Precinct No. 1, the Community Education Center.

Farmington Observer

(USPS 137-640)

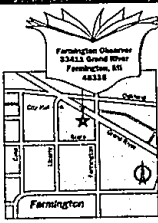
Published every Sunday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Farmington, MI 48335-0910. Periodical postage paid at Farmington, MI 48335-0910. Postmaster: Send address changes to Observer & Eccentric, Newspapers 805 E. Maple, Farmington, MI 48335-0910. Telephone 844-1100.

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