

Farmington Observer

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VOLUME 122 NUMBER 777

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 70 PAGES • <http://observer-ecentric.com>

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

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District takes giant tech trek



A voter-approved bond issue is helping pay \$3.1 million for 1,600 new computers that will go into Farmington Public School classrooms. Texas-based Dell Computer company landed a lion's share of the bids.

By TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
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Many of the buildings in Farmington Public Schools are in the midst of physical makeovers, through projects funded by the successful September 1997 bond issue.

too. The district is laying the foundation for 21st century instruction, with school board members last week approving a bid to buy 1,600 computers.

Several vendors will get a piece of the \$3.1 million action, with the dollars coming out of a specially designated capital projects fund, said Cheryl Cannon, assistant superintendent for

business and finance. Texas-based Dell Computer was awarded most of the project, \$1.9 million for Pentium 3 computers, complete with 17-inch monitors. The machines are stronger, more durable, than those commercially available to consumers.

"We just hope the tables come in before the computers so we'll have something to put them on," said Cannon, only half-jokingly, during a recent interview at the Lewis Schulman Administrative Center.

The board last week also approved: ■ \$50,000 for the purchase of 80 Toshiba Laptop computers, to Comp

USA:

■ \$189,000 for installation, to Sequoin Diversified Products;
■ \$55,000 going to Midwest Business Systems for related loose ends.

Cannon said most of the new computers will go into new labs being constructed this summer, such as North Farmington High School, with an eye on eventually having up-to-date technology throughout the district.

Dan Sutton, the district's director of informational technology, estimated that 20 percent of the new computers

Please see COMPUTERS, A1

Contractors working on the \$49 million resurfacing project of I-275 will be starting to pave the exit ramp from westbound I-496 to southbound I-275 this week.

Motorists on I-275 can expect to see work crews from John Carlo continue to pour concrete for new southbound lanes this week between Five Mile and Six Mile Roads. If the weather permits.

Exit ramps from southbound lanes of I-275 to Eight Mile, Seven Mile and Six Mile may face periodic closings as crews move equipment during this construction phase. Bridge repairs also will force occasional lane closures on the "Mile Roads."

Once paving is completed on the southbound lanes -- scheduled for completion by mid-July -- traffic in both directions will be crossed back over to the newly paved southbound side between Grand River and Five Mile Road.

I-275 construction update

IN THE PAPER TODAY

MONDAY

Council date: Farmington Hills City Council meets at 7:30 p.m. in City Hall.

SATURDAY

Going once: City of Farmington Hills will conduct its annual auction, June 26, in the police parking lot on 11 Mile Road. Jewelry, computers, bicycles, office furniture and other items will be up for bid. Public viewing starts at 9 a.m. with bidding at 10 a.m. Only cash and checks are accepted.

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Name change sheds new light on mansion

By TIM SMITH
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It's a new sign, name and -- hopefully -- era for the onetime residence of former Michigan Governor Fred Warner.

Ushering in the new era during a ribbon-cutting celebration and sign dedication Thursday night were Dick Carvell and Nancy Leonard. With scissors in hand, both of the mansion's original deacons (since the city took the building over in 1980) cut away the ribbon and decorative wrapping.

Uncovered was a green sign, with white lettering and gold trim, stating the new name: "Governor Warner Mansion ... Home of Farmington History."

Just before Carvell and Leonard did the honors, Mike Harrison, chairman of the Farmington Historical Commission and a member of the Warner Mansion Development Committee, commented how the stately home at 33805 Grand River "truly is the centerpiece of our historic district, a symbol of times past and times yet to come."

Several other members of the committee echoed Harrison and spoke with enthusiasm about how the unveiling could potentially bring awareness of the 139-year-old mansion to a greater level throughout Farmington.

Please see WARNER, A3

Hills group welcomes first refugee family

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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A Farmington Hills group started by a carpenter with a sliver of an idea has built a foundation to receive its first Kosovar refugee family.

An Albanian couple with two boys, ages 5 and 2, was expected to arrive Saturday afternoon. Volunteers have raised enough money and furnished an apartment. Food and other items have also been donated.

Hills resident Dean Unick proposed the idea of helping refugees from the war-torn region during a city council meeting a couple months ago.

Since then, a core group of 20 or so people has met regularly at St. Fabian Catholic Church to map out how to help Kosovar families left homeless by the Balkans war. An Archdiocese of Detroit representative is coordinating placements.

The Farmington Hills group plans on hosting possibly up to three families.

"I may have been the spark plug, but they have been

Please see REFUGEES, A2

Fountain of youth



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BEESLER
Gush rush: Aaron Orel and his mom Lori came to town for the kid's magic show, but Aaron was more interested in quiet contemplation of the downtown fountain.

Mercy AD on base with diocese honor

By HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

To say that Nancy Malinowski loves sports is an understatement.

The Mercy High School athletic director was recently named Athletic Director of the Year by the Archdiocese of Detroit Catholic League, which oversees athletics at Detroit's Catholic schools.

She was nominated for the award by Tom Rashid, Catholic League director for the Archdiocese of Detroit.

"She is a very hard-working and competent athletic director," said Rashid, who first became acquainted with Malinowski while she was a student at Mt. Carmel in Wyandotte.

He said he was impressed by her role as coach during the second half of the girls' softball season -- prompted by the resignation of the regular coach.

"(Mercy's) softball team, with Nancy Malinowski in the dugout as an assistant coach, scored three runs on the final pitch to upset Divine Child and then were

Please see AD, A5



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BEESLER
Wonder wall: Diana Fisher painted a garden mural on the side of Village Hidden Treasures. The design allows for eventual expansion of the artwork. The mural is clearly visible to eastbound drivers on Grand River Avenue.

Mural blossoms, brightens stores

By TIM SMITH
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Farmington's downtown business district is a little brighter and more colorful these days, thanks to the work of Dianna Fisher.

She recently painted a mural of fully bloomed flowers on the west side outside wall of Village Hidden Treasures and Village Clippers Salon, 33245 Grand River.

"It was very rewarding," said Fisher, a Farmington Hills resident who has dabbled in handicrafts since childhood. "I've never done anything that big before. I loved being out here doing it, and it was just plain fun."

Village owner Diann Cassidy enlisted Fisher -- a nine-year employee with

DOWNTOWN

The Rocking Horse, which happens to be next door to the relocated gift shop and salon.

Fisher started with a clean wall (Cassidy just had her building painted sky blue) and sketched, for distancing purposes only, "from one flower to the next."

All of the detail work was done free-hand, as she proceeded with what eventually would become a mural 24 feet high by six feet wide.

"I had something in mind," Fisher said. "But it all came out of my imagination as I was painting."

Please see MURAL, A2



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