

# Farmington Observer

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VOLUME 112 NUMBER 16

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 84 PAGES • <http://observer.occnline.com>

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## IN THE PAPER TODAY

**On the road:** A trucker offers his perspective of driving on area highways. / A9

## OPINION

**Biltz:** Community journalists are often painted with the same broad brush as are network and large metropolitan newspaper journalists. / A12

## COMMUNITY LIFE

**Silver Anniversary:** It began in 1974 as The Gathering Place. Today it's called the Farmington Hills Senior Center. More than 350 seniors celebrated its 25 years of programming at a special gala. / B1

## SPORTS

**New kid on the block:** Dabco Tool won the Founders Festival softball tournament, taking the crown away from perennial champion Vellucci and runner-up Vladimir's. / C1

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## Hills ranks with foreign investment



According to the South East Michigan Council of Governments, Farmington Hills ranks with other large suburbs with the number of companies that are either owned or operated by firms in foreign countries.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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When it comes to foreign investment, Farmington Hills is a burgeoning United Nations.

The city boasts 66 facilities either owned or operated by firms in other countries. Farmington Hills ranks only behind Southfield (88) and Troy (70) in terms of foreign investment, according to a South East Michigan Council of Governments report.

"(Farmington Hills) is certainly positioned geographically to get its fair share of investment," said John Calandro, director of administration at Nissan's Farmington Hills facility.

SEMCOG used data provided by the Detroit Regional Chamber as part of a map series on major economic activity. The regional planning bureau encompasses a seven-county area, including Oakland and Wayne counties.

Oakland County is No. 1 in terms of foreign investment with 342 facilities, which is highlighted in recent years by the DaimlerChrysler merger. Farmington has three companies owned or operated by other nations.

Not surprisingly, a large portion of those companies are automotive related.

Hills mirrors Oakland County statistics in which Japanese firms lead the way with 44 percent of businesses. Canada comprises 16 percent while Germany has 13 percent countywide.

Japanese companies - including Akebono America and Nissan - make up 40 percent of total foreign investment in Farmington Hills. Firms Bosch and Mahle represent German involvement.

Italian auto company Fiat has a research and development office in Farmington Hills.

"They're attracted to our community because they like the quality of life," Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said. "They're also close to Detroit, Dearborn and Troy where the automotive companies are located."

It also helps contribute to our diverse mix of cultures."

Nissan's Calandro served on the site selection committee. He recalls meeting with then-Hills City Manager Bill Costick and being impressed with city

Please see INVEST, A5

## Northwestern H'way project postponed

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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Orange cones and construction won't sprout along Northwestern Highway until 2001, state highway officials say.

Farmington Hills city officials see a postponement of road work, which was supposed to start in summer 2000. The project extends south of 12 Mile to 14 Mile and Orchard Lake.

MDOT asked for the delay since road work is planned on Telegraph Road from 12 Mile to Orchard Lake in Pontiac. Other north-south routes would be overloaded, state road officials reasoned.

A postponement allows Farmington Hills and Southfield to apply for enhancement grants through the state to allow for landscaping along Northwestern Highway, Public Services Director Tom Biasell said.

Wood Creek residents are also concerned about plans for a continuous right lane in both directions, fearing it will increase chance of rear-end collisions.

A series of existing right-turn only lanes, which allows motorists to slow down and enter businesses along Northwestern Highway, would be connected as part of the project.

"Their concern is, regardless of how it's striped, (motorists) would drive like it was a through lane," Biasell said.

City planners don't believe MDOT will eliminate continuous right lanes, but think plans can be modified to improve safety.

Initially the Northwestern Highway project was expected to take two years, but Southfield and Farmington Hills city officials asked that it be done in one year to cut down on disruptions.

Hills officials also want MDOT to keep two lanes open in both directions during construction. "They're going to try to do that," Biasell said. "Exactly how I'm not sure yet. That's the goal."

2001



Drake side: A view from Drake Road shows that the Minnow Creek Pond Drain work is complete. The Miron Drive side offers another view.

## On Minnow Pond A job undone

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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When residents look into a Farmington Hills pond, they don't see their reflection: They see a job undone.

A group of residents neighboring Minnow Creek Pond Drain are pleased with the view: the shimmering water spot looks, especially from Drake Road. But, the view from Miron Drive is incomplete, they say.

"Why would you start a project and not complete it?" Betty Willard asked during Monday's

## ENVIRONMENT

Farmington Hills City Council meeting.

City Manager Steve Brock had an answer. When the city asked residents to grant access to have the project done, seven of 10 agreed.

Oakland County Drain Commission oversees the project. The city is picking up the cost and work continues.

Engineers had to redesign the

Please see POND, A5

## Brouillette to lead schools

BY TIM SMITH  
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Priscilla Brouillette holds the Farmington Board of Education gavel for 1999-2000, having been elected president during Tuesday night's organizational session.

"I appreciate your confidence in me," said Brouillette to her colleagues and the public, after her unanimous election. She was nominated by Bobbie Feldman.

Both during and after the meeting, Brouillette praised the job outgoing president Cathy Webb did over the last year. "I'm honored," Brouillette said later. "It's such a good district and such a positive team to be part of. And Cathy was such a fine and gracious president, and my role model."

"I particularly liked the way she made anyone who came to the board meeting feel comfortable and welcome and I hope to continue to do that. Everybody around the board table looks at things so differently and I admire their viewpoints."

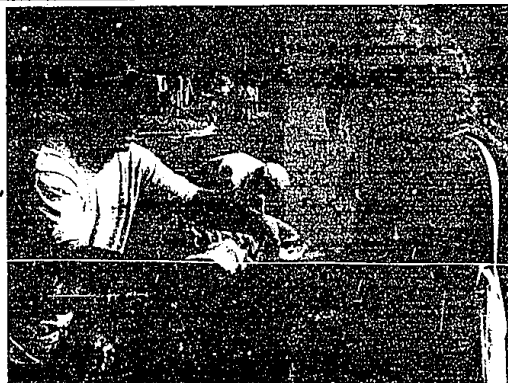
At the time Webb handed the gavel to Brouillette, Feldman - who Tuesday was elected 1999-2000 board secretary - congratulated Webb for her success as president.

"Thank you for your leadership," Feldman said.

Please see LEAD, A4



Home grown: Joan Hatch buys a dozen ears of sweet corn that Mike Fusier of Manchester picked the same day.



## Saturdays at the Farmer's Market

BY JOANNE MALINSKI  
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Becky Burns of the Farmington Bakery has experienced. She gives out coupons at the Farmington Farmers Market on Saturdays. Sure enough, shoppers bring them into her bakery during the week. "Yes, it helps business," Burns said. "We love the Farmers Market."

And she isn't the only one. Every Saturday morning

senior residents from Farmington Place are faithful customers.

"The seniors really enjoy the vegetables," said Judy Downey, executive director of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority, which sponsors the weekly Farmer's Market.

In its fifth year, the market is considered a success Downey said.

"Last week when there was corn there were lines. Peo-

Please see MARKET, A6

## Tragedy brings back heartache

BY TIM SMITH  
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Even though Rynn Sturos isn't old enough to remember the November 1963 day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, he does possess as do many other Americans of all ages - a vivid memory of 3-year-old John-John.

"Everyone, even though I wasn't born then, has the image of him saluting his father," said Sturos, who works in downtown Farmington.

## JOHN KENNEDY JR

Sturos added that it seemed like the 1997 death of Diana, Princess of Wales all over again with the unending media coverage of John F. Kennedy, Jr.'s death in a Friday evening plane crash off the shore of Martha's Vineyard.

The crash of the single-engine Piper Saratoga II HP he was piloting also claimed the life of his wife, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and his sister-in-law, Lauren Bessette.

"He was considered royalty, the closest thing we had in America to royalty," Sturos said. "This past weekend,

Please see JFK, A7

