

Cable channels will keep Y2K 'homebodies' updated on potential problems

CABLE CONNECTION

So what are you doing on New Year's Eve? Are you one of the 78 percent of people who have said they will be staying home this year to wait out any potential Y2K problems?

If so, you can get updates on anything happening in your city by watching your city government channels -

Farmington Hills Channel 8 and Farmington 15 - Your Neighborhood Network.

City officials are quick to point out, though, that they expect no serious problems. Gary Goss, Farmington director of public safety and Y2K coordinator, said they have been working on the problem for two years. He said they have followed a four-step plan and tested everything that could possibly be tested.

He also said the Farmington Emergency Operations Center will be open from 10 p.m. New Year's Eve until at least 2 a.m. New Year's Day. There will also

be additional police patrols on the streets just in case. Goss wanted to reassure residents. "We don't expect any problems, but we have contingency plans if we do," Goss said.

Over in Farmington Hills, City Manager Steve Brock believes the city has taken all necessary steps to prevent major Y2K problems. "We may experience some minor problems, but nothing major. We are prepared to deal with any problem that may arise," said Brock. Your cities are prepared but things may arise that are out of their control. If so, tune in to your govern-

ment channels for complete information.

Want to know if there are any power outages or traffic lights out in your city or surrounding cities? Need to know if school will start again on Monday, Jan. 31? Well look no further than your city government channels. They are the only places to get up-to-the-minute Y2K information about your city.

SWOCC staff will be monitoring all local news organizations, as well as local police departments and other reliable sources to obtain the most accurate information to pass along to you.

To report pertinent Y2K information call 473-7266, ext. 0.

You can tune in to your city channels now to get some tips for personal Y2K readiness, including:

- Refilling prescriptions.
- Checking with your personal computer manufacturer about any upgrades your system may require.
- Keeping emergency funds available, such as traveler's checks, or getting a little extra

cash out of the bank in case disruptions with ATMs occur.

■ Filling up your gas tank prior to New Year's Eve.

Remember, it is difficult to predict the likelihood of service disruptions with utilities, etc. It is a good idea to plan for the unexpected and have your own plan in place in case some of your services are out. And don't forget to watch your city government channels for important Y2K updates.

Melanie Young is the community relations specialist for the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission.

AAA offers safe holiday party primer

Holiday partying has begun. What's the most important thing you can do as a host to assure that guests enjoy your soiree?

The Automobile Club of Michigan suggests every party-giver should make it a primary goal to be "First A Friend, Then A Host" by including nonalcoholic options among the beverages served.

To help out, the Auto Club has published its 21st annual Great Pretenders Party Guide. The colorful, 20-page booklet includes 16 prize-winning, alcohol-free recipes for party drinks, and photos of the amateur mixologists who created them. Also in the booklet are party-snack recipes from three of Michigan's leading chefs.

The booklet provides facts about the dangers of drinking and driving and a review of new legal penalties drunk drivers face in Michigan. "Parties with family and friends are a great way to celebrate the holiday season," says Jerry Basch, AAA Michigan's manager of Community Safety Services, "but some people might be tempted to drive after drinking too many alcoholic beverages."

In 1998, 525 people died in Michigan in crashes where alcohol was a factor, and another 12,768 were injured," Basch notes.

To focus attention on the danger of drinking and driving, AAA Michigan started the "First A Friend, Then A Host" program in 1978. The Great Pretenders Party Guide is the centerpiece of the program.

The guide includes these tips for being "First A Friend, Then A Host."

■ Serve a variety of nonalcoholic beverages, and don't force alcoholic drinks on guests.

■ Slow down the drinking rate with lively conversation, party games and lots of good food.

■ Put away the alcoholic beverages after a reasonable time, and make it known that coffee and desserts are available.

■ Serve protein-rich and starchy foods throughout the party to help retard alcohol absorption.

■ Encourage car pooling, and have small gifts for designated drivers.

■ Don't let a guest drive who has had too much to drink. Take the keys, call a cab or insist the guest spend the night at your home.

To select recipes for the annual Great Pretenders Party Guide, AAA Michigan invites submission of recipe ideas from throughout the state.

Each year a different theme is chosen. This year it's "Stars of the Century." All recipes had to be named after some entertainment or sports personality of the 20th century.

In preliminary judging, 15 finalists were chosen to mix their drinks in person at regional Zero-Proof Mix-Off contests in October.

First-place winners were awarded \$500 and a Golden Stirrer Award plaque. Runners-up received a free weekend for two at Shanty Creek Resort near Bellaire, plus \$50. Honorable mentions received \$50. AAA Michigan will distribute more than 65,000 copies of the Great Pretenders Party Guide free.

They are available at all AAA Michigan branch offices, or by calling toll free 800-AAA-MICH (822-6424) or by e-mail to pa@aaa-mich.com.

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