

Looking back

City, Hills and schools packed a lot in during 1999

Civic purchase tops list

The marquee of the Civic Theatre very well should read "1999 - What a Year!"

By sheer magnitude, the (arguably) last year of the millennium turned out to be one of the biggest ever for the city of Farmington.

Leading the way, of course, was the decision by city leaders to spend \$316,500 to purchase the historic Civic from Greg Hohler, whose family owned it since its 1940 opening. The council wanted to make sure the Grand River landmark remained a central part of downtown well into the 21st century, and that it continue as a hotbed for family entertainment.

But at least one other headline-grabber took place in 1999: the community-wide development of the "Kids World" PlayScape.

"It could be argued that (1999 is) the highwater mark" for major happenings in Farmington, said Bill Richards, assistant city manager.

When Hohler, in late 1998, opted to sell the theater, he contacted city officials to see if they were interested. It didn't take long for the officials to determine that downtown without the Civic just wouldn't be the same.

After the council purchased the movie house, it hired Bill

improvements is completed, at a cost of about \$470,000.

The second phase will begin in 2000, but not until after the Grand Re-Opening weekend, Friday, Jan. 7 through Sunday, Jan. 9. An auction of theater items and \$50-per-ticket gala are the scheduled highlights.

"It was a vitally important decision for the community," said Richards, about the city's purchase of the Civic. "One, from a historical preservation perspective, ... if anybody from the community purchased the building they could have remodeled it and converted it" into an office or retail store.

"We not only could have potentially lost the theater, but the historical facade."

Secondly, the impact on the downtown economy also was a huge factor in buying the theater, which Richards said draws about 60,000 patrons each year.

Kids World kudos

Richards was instrumental in the Kids World project, which parlayed about \$70,000 in city seed money and generous contributions of money and in-kind materials/donations into a sparkling playground at Shawnee Park. The value of the facility, according to Richards, is about \$450,000.

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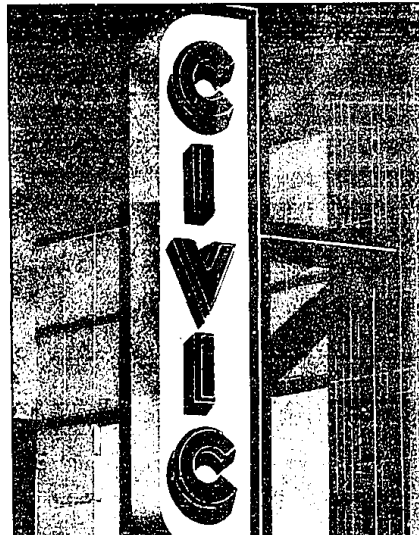
STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLER

Concern: Residents fear that the now-vacant lot next to their homes means expansion of a credit union.

"I'd say that's an outstanding bargain," said Richards about the ultimate value to Farmington in comparison to what it cost

to build it. "That's really the greater value. It's wonderful to have a world-class playground

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Landmark: The city's purchase of the historic Civic Theatre ensures its life in downtown Farmington.

Construction, block scheduling, new curriculum dominate schools



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLER

Building: Students and faculty members made due in 1999 with schools such as East Middle (above) under construction. Some parents grew exasperated with the the work and inconvenience.

Power outages, flooding continued to plague Farmington Hills in 1999

BY JONI HUBBED
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Farmington Hills took center stage this year during an investigation of the state's Public Service Commission conducted into well-documented problems with DTE Energy (formerly Detroit Edison).

Many exasperated residents have purchased generators to cope with frequent losses of power, only some of which are associated with storms. Fed up with the inconvenience, and in some cases, the imminent danger outages create, residents complained directly to represen-

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tatives from DTE, at a City Council meeting in August.

"For any time we get more than a gentle breeze, we lose power," Lincolnshire Estates resident Roger Schockor told officials then.

His house was without electricity for 44 hours after a July 31 storm. Schockor said residents with generators string extension cords across the street, to help neighbors during blackouts.

Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi underscored residents' complaints, delivering a scathing letter to the power distributor that charged the company severely underestimates the percentage of outages experienced.

"You claim less than 1 percent of all customers suffer power losses," Vagnozzi wrote, "a claim that based on our own city's

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■ Students are learning in new ways through college-style scheduling (began this year at North), elementary study initiatives and expanded student assistance services.

BY TIM SMITH
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From innovative curriculum to state-of-the-art construction, 1999 has been a year of progress for Farmington Public Schools, top officials said.

Inside schools across the district, students are learning in new ways, through college-style scheduling (began this year at North), elementary study initia-

tives and expanded student assistance services, to name a few mentioned in the year-end letter to staff members from superintendent Bob Maxfield

and school board President Priscilla Brouillette.

Outdoors around schools is evidence that the completion of

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Senior Citizens Day

STOREWIDE SAVINGS TUESDAY, JANUARY 4

Shop at Parisian and enjoy these special privileges:*

- Savings of 15% for customers aged 55-59
- Savings of 20% for customers aged 60-69
- Savings of 25% for customers age 70 and over
- Register for your Parisian Generations card
- Doors open 10:00 a.m.

*APPLIES ONLY TO SENIOR CITIZENS DAY AND PURCHASES MADE ON THAT DAY. EXCLUDING SALE PRICED AND CLEARANCE MERCHANDISE. EXCLUDING COSMETICS, FRAGRANCES, APPLIANCES, ALL POLYMER PHILADELPHIA PRODUCTS, ALL COMPANY HOLIDAY PRODUCTS, TOMMY BANANA, ALL CALVIN KLEIN PRODUCTS, TIMBERLAND, BOBBY JONES GOLF, CLARKSON, PENNY FELLOWS, JOSEPH ABOUDD, BARRY BRIDGEMAN, ROBERT TAYLOR, THROUGH COLLIER, JESSICA MCCLELLAND, MACDONALD, NATION, DONNA KARAN, ENZO, CHRISTOPHER RABINO, GIOVANNI, ALL WATERSHOP PRODUCTS, CALIFORNIA, ALL CLAD, CAPRISSA, WURSTHOF, SALON AND DAY SPA PRODUCTS, AND SERVICES, GIFT CERTIFICATES, WATCHES AND GREAT BOUTIQUE JEWELRY. SPECIAL ORDERS AND PREVIOUSLY PURCHASED ITEMS. CANNOT BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER DISCOUNT COUPON OR OFFER.

