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will begin renovations to what will be his 16th metropolitan Detroit store.

"We're hoping (the opening) will be around August," Denha said.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff took reporters to the Ferndale Dollar Castle location to show the kind of operation Denha promises to bring to Farmington.

"I'm extremely impressed with his operation," Lauhoff said. "It's so well set up and designed for the customer. The way product is presented and with the brightness of the store, it's more like Kresge's used to be."

Lauhoff said Denha's store should be popular with Farmington's senior citizens, who were unhappy when Farmer Jack bolted from the downtown store in June 1998. Dollar Castle isn't exactly a grocery store, which residents told city officials they wanted to fill the Farmer Jack void. But it will carry several aisles worth of food items, from canned vegetables to cookies to cereals to boxed spaghetti.

"It's going to serve a lot of peo-

ple in the area," Lauhoff said. "It will provide such a variety of products."

Not junky

Items won't be "cheap" in terms of quality, but they will be inexpensive with nothing priced over one dollar, said Denha, a West Bloomfield resident. The reason is he buys merchandise in bulk. Food is only part of what is available at Dollar Castle. There are household items, toys, vitamins, light bulbs, silk flowers, arts and crafts, school and office supplies and ceramic coffee mugs.

Freshness and high quality are guaranteed. A banner hanging above the shiny tiled floors promises to "exchange up to 10 items up to 10 days" if customers are not satisfied with their purchases.

Shoppers will find mostly generic brands, although there are some bigger name brands such as Del Monte lining the shelves.

One of Denha's objectives is to dispel any thoughts that because the store says "Dollar Castle,"

that automatically signifies a place filled with dispensable junk.

"I'm changing the trends," said Denha, who patterned Dollar Castle after a retail concept started in California by a friend. "We're evolving into the new five-and-dime."

He added that "a picture speaks a thousand words," and that after people shop his store "trust me, they'll come back."

Denha said he received a five-year lease from the center's landlord (Kimco Realty Corp.), with an option for a second five years. The Farmington store will be about 12,000 square feet, virtually the same size as the Ferndale store on Nine Mile Road west of Woodward Avenue.

Other current Dollar Castle locations, besides Ferndale, include two in Detroit, Oak Park and Sterling Heights and single stores in Commerce Township, Southfield, Redford Township, White Lake Township, Orion Township, Warren, Lansing and Clinton Township.

Damman is growing

BY TRACEY BIRKENHAUER STAFF WRITER

While some of the bigger home improvement stores are closing, locally owned Damman Hardware is expanding.

"We've already driven out Home Quarters and Builder's Square," joked Rick Damman, the hardware chain's president and CEO since 1977.

The company Rick's grandfather, Dolph Damman, started with one Detroit store in 1920 has blossomed into 17 stores throughout Michigan.

The Farmington location, which opened 18 years ago, is almost doubling in size. It's going from 13,000 square feet to 20,000. The store isn't merely expanding, it's moving a couple doors down, to the space Farmer Jack vacated in June of 1998.

One of the best features will be a rear entrance, so patrons can use the back parking lot.

"We wanted to bring in more products and better merchandise," Rick Damman said. "We always thought we were cramped. When

'We want them to stay in Farmington. They will now offer a lot more services and bring people from further distances.'

Frank Lauhoff
—City manager

selfers prefer Home Depot to shopping at a more intimate, locally owned store, Damman said he isn't threatened.

"We supplement what Home Depot does," he said. "They do a lot of major products, such as lumber, but we're more oriented to service, convenience and housewares."

"I really can't say enough about our service or our people. They're the best."

The new store will provide expanded seasonal, recreation, home and garden and houseware departments.

"It will be a brand-new store, really," said store manager Rod Vought. "I'm just excited to get over there."

Both locations will be open concurrently for awhile, but the new store should be fully operational by June 1. A June 10 grand opening will feature America's Master Handyman, Glenn Haeg, the Detroit-based syndicated talk-show host.

"We believe we're bringing something positive to the city," Damman said, "and we're happy to be there."

Farmer Jack's space became available, we expressed an interest. We've been discussing it with our landlords for three years."

New York-based Kimco Development Corp. owns the building. Damman signed a 20-year lease, "so we're there for the duration," he said.

That's good news for the city of Farmington.

"We're very happy Damman has done so well," said city manager Frank Lauhoff. "We want them to stay in Farmington. They will now offer a lot more services and bring people from further distances. That's exactly what we're trying to encourage."

While many do-it-your-

Arts from page A1

Some highlights include the opening gala dinner held from 6:30-11 p.m. on Saturday, April 29, at the Costick Center, featuring a gourmet dinner, auctions and live music. The event is where the public gets to view the exhibits for the first time.

As for the festival itself, its main highlight will be the PTA "Reflections" exhibit, with more than 60 pieces, including art, literature and music, by award-winning students.

"This is truly one-stop shopping for the arts,"

Coumoundouros said. "The general purpose, though, is to recognize the importance of the arts."

Hillside students double as docents at Warner Mansion

On Sunday, May 7, from 1-4 p.m., third grade students from Hillside Elementary School will host "An Afternoon at Warner Mansion" and act as docents for tours of the Governor Warner Mansion.

The entire Farmington community is invited to attend.

Student docents will be stationed around the six main rooms and four bedrooms of the mansion, with regular adult docents assisting them.

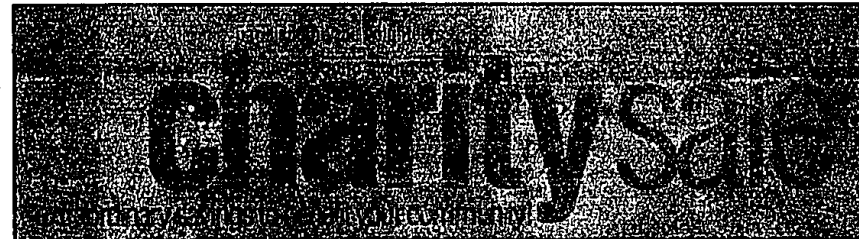
Complete tours of the mansion will generally take at least 30 minutes. In addition to the tour of the mansion, other activities

will include dancing and games on the lawn.

Working cooperatively on a service project is one of the goals for Hillside third grade students. Additionally, the students have spent much of this school year learning about Farmington history and the community as a whole.

There will be no charge for tours of the mansion on this day, as the Hillside PTA is covering all admission fees.

For further information, please contact: Betsy Petokey, Hillside parent and event coordinator, (248) 473-5768.



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