

IN THE PAPER TODAY

All artists apply: The Farmington Area Arts Commission is looking for a few good artists. Nominations are being sought for the 2001 Artist-In-Residence, and student artists are invited to enter a contest. See HomeTown Life, Page C5.

Kindergarten, here they come! Parents and students have until Friday to sign up for kindergarten classes in Farmington Schools. See Page A3

OPINION

I-275 Tunnel of Silence



I-275 noise: It's time to focus attention on solutions that will make a real difference for residents. See Page A6

School ratings: A new study of schools could help local officials map a brighter future. See Page A6

ARTS & LEISURE

Music: Detroit gains a music festival of it's own with Mid By Midwest, a festival made by musicians for musicians. / B1

INDEX

- Apartments/E7
- At Home/C1
- Automotive/F4
- Classified/E, F
- Classified
- Index/E8
- Crossword/E8
- Entertainment/B1
- Life/C8
- Obituaries/A8
- Opinion/A6
- Real Estate/E1
- Service Guide/F4
- Sports/D1

Arctic adventure



Eskimo dreams: Andrew Chen gets an idea what it might be like to be an Inuit.

STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BREZLER

TAKING A TUNDRA TOUR

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
tsmith@oe.hometown.com.net

For kindergartners such as Jackie Heia, nothing could top a visit to the Alameda Arctic Adventure. Jackie and her classmates at Alameda Early Childhood Center entered the tundra Tuesday morning by crawling through an igloo entrance. Once inside the black light-lit, closet-sized space featuring student-made artwork of landscapes and polar bears, the children jumped around with glee.



Listen up: Science teacher Terry Schneider talks with youngsters at Alameda about the tundra.

Please see TUNDRA, A3

Meeting set on 14 Mile plan

Farmington Hills officials have set a special meeting March 5 to consider approval of a draft PUD agreement for 320,000 square feet of retail space in the 14 Mile/Orchard Lake Northwestern area.

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER
jhubred@oe.hometown.com.net

Developers working in the Northwestern/14 Mile/Orchard Lake area in Farmington Hills have pulled requests for separate rezonings and concentrated their full attention on finalizing Planned Unit Developments.

The PUD allows properties with different zonings to be developed as a whole, which is one of the city's Master Plan criteria.

Grand Sakwa/Phoenix Development and Lowe's Home Centers both withdrew separate rezoning requests for their properties, which were to be considered during public hearings at Monday night's City Council meeting. At a 6 p.m. study session, Rick Ratner of Lowe's said his company had decided to separate itself from the original PUD, a three-phased proposal.

"We have 15,818 acres that we control as a user," he said. "We're not a developer."

Ratner said Lowe's would come back in the near future with an "alternative use" proposal. Developer Gary Sakwa, who reviewed a draft PUD agreement with officials, said his firm was still negotiating with Lowe's; however, those talks had come to a standstill. He is negotiating with a Lowe's competitor.

Sakwa said business brokers had indicated small, boutique-style shops would be interested in the approximately 320,000-square-foot center. The first of two phases would include only the retail center. For Phase II, the partners are studying "lifestyle centers," which include both commercial and residential development, in Ohio, Indiana and Georgia.

Mark Drane of Rogvooy Architects said a "neo-traditional" look had been

Please see 14 MILE, A2

Property owners learn about Farmington Road widening

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
tsmith@oe.hometown.com.net

Property owners living along a two-mile stretch of Farmington Road designated for widening and reconstruction had an opportunity Monday to discuss the planned \$7 million project.

They also could take a look at computer-generated aerial photographs of where that work will take place.

Thirty-to-35 of an estimated 150 property owners who have homes or businesses along Farmington between

Eight Mile and Grand River attended the meeting at Farmington City Hall. The three-hour session was hosted by the Board of Road Commissioners for Oakland County and the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

"This just to inform (those) ... who are affected by general construction, get some of their concerns and make things go as smoothly as possible," said Jeff O'Brien of the road commission's engineering department. "Most are asking about the schedule, how it impacts their ingress and egress and

why it is being done."

Targeted for construction is the two-mile stretch of Farmington Road north from Eight Mile to just south of Grand River. Phase one begins in July, between Eight and Nine Mile roads, while the remaining section is scheduled for spring and summer of 2002.

The entire stretch of Farmington will be rebuilt. Meanwhile, a fifth lane is to be added from Eight Mile north to Slocum, which is about two blocks south of Grand River, O'Brien said.

During phase one, motorists proba-

bly will have one lane open to them in both directions. It's not known whether the same access will be available during next year's construction.

Also attending the meeting were representatives from both cities, including Kevin Gushman, director of the Farmington Public Services Department.

"It seemed to be well received," Gushman said Tuesday. "There will always be a minority of people who oppose either the project or some element of it. But given the condition of

Please see WIDENING, A3

Hills officials spar over greens fee hikes

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER
jhubred@oe.hometown.com.net

Anyone who's convinced Farmington Hills city officials meet behind closed doors to work out their differences on any given issue should have been watching Monday night's council meeting.

Officials bantered good-naturedly, but finally approved a proposal to increase greens fees at San Marino Public Golf Course, with councilman Chris McRae and councilwoman Vicki Barnett opposing.

The weekday and weekend rates for residents would go up 25 cents to \$10.75 and \$12 for nine holes; 50 cents for 18 holes, to \$17.25 and \$19.25. Non-residents would pay an additional 50 cents for nine holes, \$13.50 weekday and \$15.50 weekend, and another dollar for 18, \$21.25 weekday and \$23.25 weekend.

Seniors and young people will pay \$7 for nine holes and \$11 for 18.

McRae started the debate by voicing his opposition to those age-based discounts. He proposed a schedule based

on peak and off-peak times instead, saying the rate structure made "sweeping generalizations" about the ability of certain age groups to afford the fees.

"As a question of fairness for all citizens, I think the difference in rates is ridiculous," he said.

Barnett opposed the increases, but for a different reason.

"I don't know if our costs are going up as much as the rates are," she said, noting officials hadn't received a cost-based justification. Barnett added, "I like what Mr. McRae had to say about how we charge for golfing. I think that's a very interesting approach."

Having served for 10 years on the parks and recreation board, councilman Jerry Ellis had no questions about whether the rate hike was necessary.

"I know costs go up every year," he said. "If we tried to cut corners, we would get more complaints than we would about the quarter. We are in a competitive business."

Ellis also pointed out the city's rates were comparatively low, to keep the

Please see GOLF, A2

Sure sign of spring



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREZLER

The cookies are comin': DJaun Minor and Gregg Brown load cases of cookies into Girl Scout Troop 817 leader Barb McDonald's minivan. The parking lot at Nardin Park Presbyterian Church handled a steady stream of vehicles on Monday as four large semi-trucks and their crews unloaded their precious cargo.

HARDEN - Dining Room
table with two seats,
six chairs \$450

Sold. Good job!
- R.P. Rochester Hills

HomeTown Classifieds
Call 734-591-0900