

DCX

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said Bates, who was surrounded by hundreds of guests and employees in the building's main courtyard.

Overhead flew four flags representing the partnership: America, Germany, Canada and Mexico.

"You have our best wishes for outstanding success and welcome home," Bates said.

Dieter Zetsche, president and CEO of Chrysler Group, said, "This day is about commitment to our customers, to

Overhead flew four flags representing the partnership: America, Germany, Canada and Mexico.



Jurgen H. Walker addresses the media.

PHOTOS BY BILL BATES/LEADER OBSERVER



The interior of the former Michigan National Bank complex was completely rebuilt for DaimlerChrysler.

Michigan, Oakland County and Farmington Hills."

Mangold said the company chose Michigan and Farmington Hills, "because we like it. We are Michiganders."

Also joining in well wishes were Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson and Lt. Gov. Dick Posthumus.

Mangold and Jurgen Walker, president and CEO of DaimlerChrysler Services

North America, held a press conference before the ceremony.

Walker said putting the financial services arm of the company into one building will allow employees to work better and enhance the company's goal of gaining additional market share in car leasing contracts.

"What's most important is our relationship to customers," he said.

"Our success factor is having the right people in the right place," he said.

Mangold said a focus for the financing division will be leasing more cars through dealerships as more and more customers in the U.S. appear to want to use cars, not own them.

He said in Europe, leasing vehicles is not as popular as in the U.S. but it is a growing trend.

"Leasing customers have a much higher loyalty (rate) than buyers," said Mangold.

Regarding the 0-percent financing war that was started by General Motors, Mangold said the company had no choice but to follow suit, but the incentive will come to a reasonable end eventually.

Mangold added the company has increased its reserves in the last 18 months in

order to cushion itself during economic uncertainty while still being able to venture

into risks.

ppace@oe.homescomm.net | (248) 477-5450

CONSULTANT

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cial study session Sept. 17. It's the same one forwarded to the DDA board for continuation of the hiring process to replace Farmington Downtown Development Authority Judy Downey, who also retires Jan. 3, 2003. Bill Richards, assistant Farmington city manager, withdrew from handling the process, citing philosophical differences.

By charter, council must hire a new city manager within 90

days of Lauhoff's last day.

Councilwoman Joanne McShane asked how the public could provide comments now. Lauhoff suggested people can verbally relate their thoughts or concerns to him, and he will forward them to council members. Written comments could also be accepted.

"We do the hiring," Mitchell said. "It's important for the public to understand what role we serve."

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Jeff Pavlik, co-owner of

Farmington Bakery, was given the opportunity to make a comment after the Tuesday council meeting was adjourned.

"What we've learned with the DDA search is that an openness at some point is a good way to start," Pavlik said. "As far as perception is reality, I don't think the problem is which consultant you pick. I think the concern is who else is available to have their ear."

Knowing the questions candidates will answer is important, and these questions must come from a whole array of

community members. Pavlik said. The DDA decided to open up the rest of the hiring process to replace Judy Downey, after Pavlik and his wife, Becky Burns, and other downtown business owners sought more information about the candidates. Semifinalist interviews will be held beginning at 9 a.m. Tuesday at Farmington City Hall and are open to the public. Pavlik and Burns, a former newspaper reporter, complained initially about what they considered a closed process. The couple supported

a more formal process for giving input in the search.

Burns later submitted a Freedom of Information request for information connected with the DDA search, which was denied.

The two got mixed reactions from people, Pavlik said. They haven't lost any customers but some people no longer look them in the eye and shake their hands. Others say, "Thanks for doing it," Pavlik said.

Mitchell said officials will try to address the issue of openness, respecting the fact that

some applicants may not want their names released to the public.

"There will people who apply for jobs who will test the waters to see whether or not they will make the cut. They don't want to be embarrassed by people knowing they didn't make the cut," he said. "They may not want their employers to know they are looking for a job. When we do the interviews, I think you heard Tom Schultz say, we are going to do those in public."

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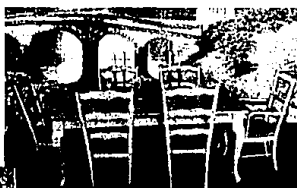
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