

Hills officials look forward to positive change in 2003

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER
A new year dawns and Farmington Hills city officials are excited about positive changes expected in 2003. Projects in the works for the past several years will finally come to fruition.

The new 47th District Court behind the city hall complex will open; the Farmington Hills Golf Club (previously known as San Marino Golf Course) will open with condominiums. "It's looking good," said Hills City Manager Steve Brock. "The clubhouse will be done and we hope to have the (course) ready by at least mid-summer. We'll see how the (grass) growth comes in."

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Steve Brock
Farmington Hills city manager

tenance buildings will be moving and the new Nature Center in Heritage Park will open in the new year.

DEVELOPMENTS

The city manager is also excited about the growth of North Orchard Place between Orchard Lake and Northwestern Highway. "We plan on the next phase having high-end retail," he

LAW ENFORCEMENT

For Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer, the good news has been violent crimes in the city have been down 15 percent in the past year and he attributes much of it to the multitude of community policing programs.

"We're looking forward to decreasing crime in the next year," he said. "We take a lot of pleasure in serving the public and keeping it safe to the residents," he said. "Overall, it was a good year, it's very encouraging."

SAYING GOODBYE

For Nancy Bates, it will be somewhat sentimental in the new year as she plans to serve her last year on the Farmington Hills City Council and her two-year term as mayor.

She said with state revenue sharing predicted to be cut even more in the new year, volunteerism will be as important as ever. Bates has made important steps in helping the youth in the city with the Mayors Youth

Council and the Commission for Children Youth and Families, and she's looking forward to the youth center opening up this year at the Farmington Hills Ice Arena. It will give teens a place to be in a controlled environment where they get to choose their activities.

She said she's also happy about the expansion of the fire station on Grand River and Wheeler, which will also have a youth room in the future.

"We have to watch our economic development and tax base," she said of 2003. The city's finances are in good shape, she said. "I have think we have the most superior staff around and it starts at the top with Steve Brock."

"I have loved being on the city council and loved being mayor," she said. "We can be sure it will go on. I have given it my best."

NEW BEGINNINGS

While one local career in office will be coming to a close, another will begin.

In January, Former Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi will start

his new role as state representative for Farmington/Farmington Hills.

Vagnozzi said he hopes to get on the education, health policy and local government committees once work begins in Lansing.

He plans to introduce a bill that would increase the state tax rebate for seniors from \$1,200 to \$1,500.

He said the state rebate amount hasn't changed in 27 years.

"I just think it's due," he said. "My taxes have tripled since 27 years ago."

He also thinks legislators should take a pay cut if the state budget is in a deficit.

"You can't tell others to take a hit if you don't take one yourself," he said.

Vagnozzi also plans to put legislative suggestion boxes at city buildings and host meetings with the public as well as have two cable television talk shows where the one segment he will talk with local newspaper editors and another where he invites local officials to discuss issues.

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