

How this Canton UAW Local farmers' market cuts costs

By SHERRY KAHAN

CANTON — The people who gave you cost of living protection, a guaranteed annual wage and Walter Reuther now are working on the family food budget in Canton Township.

Every Friday a farmers' market is held in the parking lot of UAW Local

735 on Michigan Avenue, with reduced prices the order of the day. The general public is welcome.

"We insist that the farmers who sell here sell below the prices of regular stores and we watch to see our customers are not overcharged," said Lee Huffstutter of Livonia, financial secretary of the local.

A man unwilling to take the high cost of food lying down, Huffstutter was the prime mover in the establishment of a market on the local's premises.

"I am a firm believer in doing anything you can for your members and that includes lowering their grocery bills," he said. "If every local (union) started something like this I believe we could force down prices in chain stores. We've got to do something — we can't continue the way we were."

"As a matter of fact I would like to put gas pumps out here," he said, as visions of cut-rate gas, shoes, clothes, cars seemed to dance in his head.

About three months ago the local decided to contact farmers who daily bring their produce to Detroit's Eastern Market to see if some of them would be willing to stop off in Canton Township on their way home.

At first disinterest was rampant. A few perked up when Huffstutter mentioned that members of his local, all employed by the Hydrumatic Division of General Motors in Ypsilanti (the famous Willow Run bomber plant of World War II) numbered about 6,000. Not to mention 1,500 retirees.

Paul Stephanson, a fifth generation farmer from South Haven, was one of those who became interested in the project. He is glad he did because now four other locals in the area are holding similar sales in their parking lots.

Every midnight while union members are sleepily digesting the food they ate the day before, either he or his son sets out from their farm 200 miles away in a truck containing local produce.

Currently the farmers are offering a 50-pound bag of Michigan potatoes for \$6.50, a dozen Florida juice oranges for 49 cents, seven large grapefruit for \$1, three pounds of tomatoes at \$1, a slab of bacon for 79 cents a pound, and cabbage at 12 cents a pound.

"Soon we will be selling a full line of vegetable and bedding plants," he said. "Our prices are always below the regular markets and are approved by the union."

Prepared chili made by National Chili, which makes the chili sold for coney islands is also available. No

charge is made for the use of the parking lot.

Local 735 is so pleased with the response of its members — from 300 to 400 turn up each Friday between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. to shop — that it has erected a pavilion at the rear of the parking lot, which when completed will accommodate the farmers and the shoppers.

"Local farmers have already started calling me to ask what we would like them to grow," said Huffstutter. "But we are going to have to be careful about that. We don't want to start fights among them when they compete to sell their potatoes or corn."

Louis Carreiro, president of the local, is of the opinion that local members and their wives favor the operation. Seconding him was Charles Davis, a union member, who said, "My wife claims she couldn't do without it. I think we hit the jackpot with this idea."

"My wife has told her family and friends about our market and they come too," said Tommy Blevins, a member of the shop committee since 1956. "It's a real good deal for everybody."

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FARMER PAUL STEPHANSON, in checked shirt, who brings in produce and meat from his farm in South Haven, discusses the price of ham with union men as well as members of the general public visiting the market. (Staff photo by Bob Woodring)



ANYONE FOR BACON, sausage, ham, or prepared chili? The UAW Local 735 market features all of them. Before long vegetable and flowering plants will go on sale. (Staff photo by Bob Woodring)

Westland Center to expand; Topps store closes its door

By LEONARD POGER

WESTLAND — Westland shoppers and taxpayers received some good news and bad news this week. The good news is that Westland Shopping Center will start work this summer on the first stage of a 50 per cent expansion in stores and floor space. The bad news is that Topps Discount Department Store, one of the

city's three major retail stores, quietly closed its doors.

"The Westland Center expansion, the Observer & Eccentric learned, will have an estimated 220,000 square feet of space added within the next two years. The center now has 440,000 square feet.

Preliminary working drawings of the expansion have been given to city officials for review prior to asking for formal approval of the site plan.

Site work will start this summer on an addition of 50,000 square feet of store space on the west end of the center.

That expansion and the renovation of 20,000 square feet of space recently vacated by Kroger Supermarket will have 25-30 new stores open for business by the fall of 1975.

A J. C. Penney department store of nearly 160,000 square feet will have construction start next year with a planned opening for the fall of 1976. The Penney store will be on the far west side of the center's site and will have landscaped entrances near the recently opened loop road.

No dollar estimates have been given for the expansion program but the existing center has a market value of \$17 million.

When completed, the program will give Westland Center 82 stores, compared to 52 now.

The finalizing of plans for the expansion comes after a year of private speculation about Westland Center's future growth.

The closing of Topps came without public announcements or "closing out" sales.

There were no signs or banners at the store indicating that the store of about 100,000 square feet would close its doors for good.

But going into its last weekend of business, Topps had only a few small sections still stocked with merchandise.

Employees had taken down shelves and goods in most of the store which opened March, 1966.

The Topps shopping center includes

four other stores, one of which was opened just a year ago.

There are no reports of what the building at Ford and Wildwood will be used for, or who it will be sold to.

The Westland Center expansion will result in a substantial growth in the city's tax base with most of the taxes going to the Wayne - Westland Community Schools.

The center opened in July 1965, and there have been no major additions since then.

Engineering tests at LIT April 26

The engineering aptitude tests for high school students conducted for the Junior Engineering Technical Society (JETS) of N.Y. will be repeated on Friday, April 26, at 1 p.m. at the Lawrence Institute of Technology.

The first series of test, at LIT on March 16, attracted 132 students, including 30 girls from 65 high schools in Southeastern Michigan where LIT is the designated center for JETS national engineering aptitude search.

Dr. Stephen R. Davis, LIT Dean of Engineering, arranged a repeat of the tests to satisfy many high school students, parents, and counselors who did not learn of the first series in time. Normally the tests are given once a year throughout the United States. Students taking the test receive

a personal report of results and how they compare with other students throughout the country.

"High school students planning a career in engineering should begin with an early selection of courses, such as science and mathematics, which are prerequisites for admission to engineering college," Davis said.

"By taking the tests they have an opportunity to learn more about themselves and their abilities in the areas of verbal, numerical, science mechanical comprehension which would relate to their probable success in college studies leading to a professional degree in engineering."

Davis said the unusual interest in the test may be attributed to the booming market for engineers brought about by the increased demand for engineers coupled with the decline over the past several years in engineering students.

A survey conducted by the National College Placement Council found that employers expect of hire 31 per cent more new engineers this year than last.

A \$3 fee per student is charged by JETS, a non-profit organization, to help offset test expenses.

New Horizons adds to staff

George A. Retelle of Royal Oak has been named to fill the new position of business manager by New Horizons of Oakland County, Inc., a private non-profit vocational rehabilitation agency in Farmington Hills.

New Horizons is partially supported by United Foundation.

Vets get aid with statement

Loss of a birth certificate or marriage license will not prevent veterans from receiving benefits.

Veterans Administration officials said under a regulation in effect since October 1971, a certified statement is acceptable proof of marriage or birth of a child of the marriage when applying for benefits.

A veteran's or widow's certified statement of marriage is acceptable on applications for compensation and education benefits for veterans, widows and orphaned children, provided neither the veteran or spouse has been married before and the VA has no contradictory information on file.

A similar statement is acceptable regarding the birth of a child of a veteran's marriage, or proof of age and relationship in disability cases.

In death cases, certified statements are sufficient if the claimant's statements are corroborated.

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