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AT HOME - PAGE B1



WESTLAND Observer

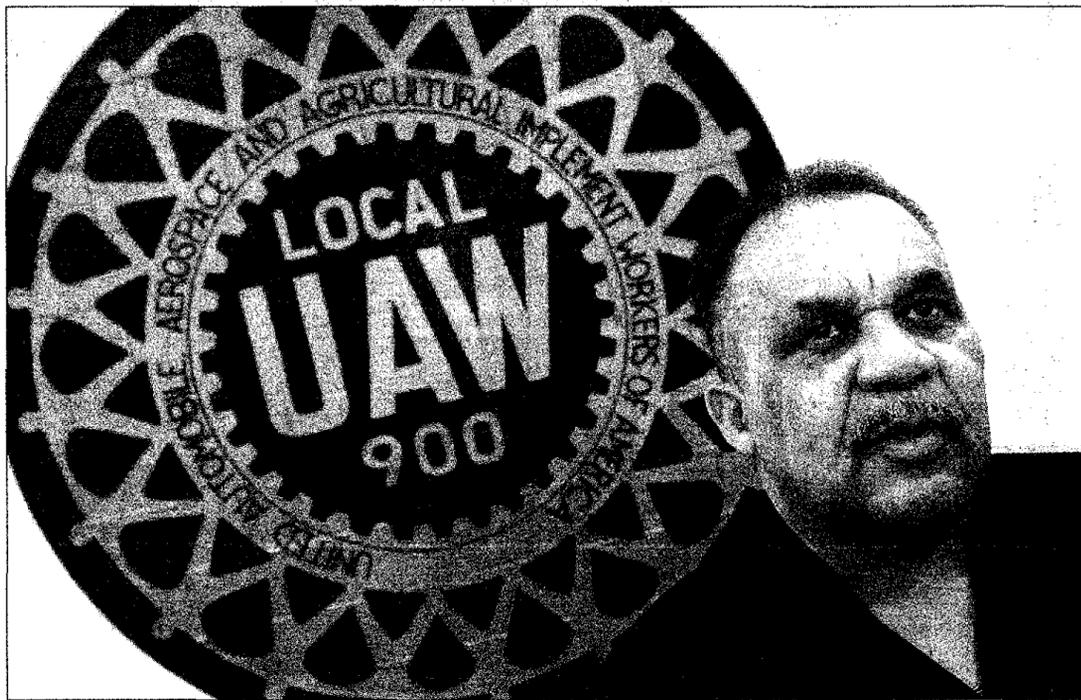
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PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

According to Jeff Washington, UAW Local 900 president, 'the mood is always bad in a situation like this, regardless of where you lose the jobs.'

Ford's plan? An 'attack on middle class'

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Ford Motor Co.'s decision to close its Wixom Assembly Plant rippled through Westland this week, while workers feared that future job cuts could threaten plants in Wayne.

"I think it's an attack on the middle class," said Westland resident Ron Graunstadt, health and safety representative for United Auto Workers Local 36 in Wixom. "Jobs are being shipped to Mexico. Very shortly, people aren't going to be able to afford the products that the car companies are making, and that's going to be another tremendous blow."

Graunstadt, 50, indicated Tuesday that he expects a layoff notice by early next year. Meanwhile, as Ford announced Monday that it will close 14 plants - slashing 30,000 hourly jobs and 4,000 salaried positions - workers seemed nervous inside the UAW Local 900 hall in Wayne, across from the company's Michigan Truck and Wayne Assembly plants.

"A job could be here today and gone tomorrow," hourly worker Jason Hillman, 33, said. "If Americans would buy American cars, we could save our jobs."



Sam Beydoun, a 10-year employee of the Michigan Truck Plant in Wayne, said a lot his fellow employees 'are still hoping that we won't lose our jobs.'

PLEASE SEE FORD, A4

Officials, family differ over cause of fatal fire

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A fire that killed a 3-year-old girl early Saturday on Westland's northeast side has resulted in wildly different versions of what happened.

Relatives say the toddler, Mary Jones, was killed after a masked man threw a burning object through a bedroom window of the home on Inkster Road, north of Warren.

"There was a murder in that house," said Gabriel Jones, 29, an uncle who lives there and who was babysitting the visiting girl.

But fire and police officials say the girl died after an 8-year-old boy, described as her cousin, accidentally started the fire while playing with a cigarette lighter.

"We are in full support of the conclusion that has been drawn by the fire department based on their intensive investigation," Police Chief Daniel Pfannes said Wednesday.

Jones criticized local authorities and accused them of failing to conduct a thorough investigation.

Pfannes maintained that family members have refused repeated offers to discuss the situation with police.

"The police department is only saddened that we can't get the primary witness or any other family member to come in and help with the investigation," he said.

According to Fire Chief Michael Reddy, the fire started about 12:15 a.m. Saturday inside the single-family home.

"It looks like the kid was playing with a lighter," Reddy said. "We believe that he started something on fire and tried to put it out, then left the room and didn't tell anybody."

PLEASE SEE FIRE, A6

Police arrest 3 men in thefts from vehicles

BY CAROL MARSHALL
STAFF WRITER

Three Westland men - ages 17, 18 and 22 - have been arrested following a rash of thefts from cars in Canton.

The police began looking for them after seven Canton residents called to report that someone had entered their cars and had stolen valuables, electronics and cash from them.

Two of the callers were a husband and wife, who reported that not only had someone got into their Cadillac DeVille and Cadillac Escalade; the two cars had been stolen early on Jan. 16.

"They had OnStar, and activated it immediately," said Westland Police Sgt. Dave Heater. OnStar reported that both cars were in the area of Central City Parkway and Ford in Westland, so Westland officers headed there within hours of the theft.

They found the DeVille, which was being followed by a red Mercury Mystique. Officers stopped both cars and the driver of the DeVille admitted that the Cadillac was stolen. Both drivers were arrested.

The Escalade was found nearby in a Kroger parking lot.

Police believed that there must have been a third person involved, since there were three vehicles in question. After questioning the two men who were in custody, they were able to track down a third suspect, and arrested him on Jan. 17.

Inside the DeVille and the Mercury, there was what appeared to be a lot of items that officers believed to be stolen.

"There was cash, electronics, CD players, car stereos with the wires ripped out," Heater said.

The Canton residents who reported their cars had been ransacked were called, and five of them identified some of the items as

theirs. A Northville Township woman and a Dearborn Heights man also were called to retrieve items.

"What people have to understand about these thefts is that none of the cars were locked. What they were doing is called carhopping, where they don't have to cause damage to get into the car," Heater said. Even worse, there were extra car keys in the Cadillacs. "So they just got into the cars, found the keys and drove them away."

All three men have been charged with two counts of car theft, four counts of breaking and entering a car and one count of possession of stolen property. One man was charged with use of a stolen credit card after police said he fueled up, using a credit card stolen from one of the Canton cars.

The men are being held at Wayne County Jail on cash bond ranging from \$50,000 to \$150,000.

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Teens take car after missing bus

Two Churchill High School students were apprehended while in class on Monday in connection with the theft of a car from a Westland apartment complex.

The two boys, both 16-year-old Westland residents, told police they missed the bus to school, so they took a 2004 Sebring that was running in an apartment complex parking lot near the bus stop.

Livonia police Lt. Greg Winn said the owner of the car knew some Churchill students congregate in her apartment complex's parking lot, so she drove to the school looking for her car.

"She found her car in the school parking lot and called us," Winn said. "A school security camera captured the two boys getting out of the car that morning."

The boys were detained by police and placed in the Wayne County Youth Home. On Wednesday, they were awaiting to be charged in the juvenile court system.

Winn said Westland police are interested in talking to the duo about the theft of at least one other vehicle in that city. He added one of the teenage suspects is on a tether as part of his sentence for a previous car theft conviction.

By Dan West

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Board weighs bus purchase

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Livonia Public School trustees are currently mulling over the purchase of 20 new buses and seven replacement buses for the coming school year.

The estimated cost is \$1.8 million for the school district, according to Lisa Levesque, director of business services. The buses would be required to institute the Legacy plan, which will close seven buildings, redraw boundaries and restructure the district's grade levels.

"We projected we would need 15 to 30 buses for the Legacy Initiative," said Levesque. "We've been working very hard to get a handle on busing for next year."

All of the buses the district is considering purchasing are Michigan Blue Bird Buses, fit for 77 passengers at a cost of about \$66,985 each. Levesque is recommending the district purchase from the lowest bidder, Cardinal Bus Sales and Service.

"It's less than we projected," said Levesque, who estimated \$70,000 per bus for this purpose.

She suggested the district finance the buses over six years. Levesque said the district usually opts to buy rather than lease buses because leasing usually costs more and allows the district to keep the buses for a shorter amount of time.

Trustee Cynthia Markarian addressed concerns from parents opposed to the Legacy Initiative, regarding the amount of money that would be devoted to transportation under this

plan.

"The savings projected by implementing the Legacy Initiative plan included spending money to purchase buses," Markarian said. "So this purchase does not chew into the projected savings at all."

"The bid for the buses came in lower than expected for added savings."

She also mentioned the potential need to purchase radios for communication among the bus fleet. "The district will recycle radios if possible, but if new radios are required the cost of a radio and a bus together is still less than the original projected price," she said.

Todd Dickinson, fleet maintenance supervisor for the district, said there have been many advancements in school bus design. He highlighted safety features including a sloped-hood design for better visibility, and noted new air-ride seats and high quality motors and transmission.

He said the district has been replacing buses once they reach 10 years old, because the vehicles sustain extensive rust due to Michigan winters and salted roads. Steve Woodworth, transportation supervisor, said the oldest buses in the district's fleet were purchased in 1995.

"At the next regular board meeting we will ask the board to approve a resolution to seek bids for financing," said Levesque.

The board's next meeting is 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 30, at the board office, 15125 Farmington Road.

Federal agents search GC police officer's home

Federal agents executed a search warrant at the home of a Garden City Police officer Jan. 19 in connection with a grand jury investigation.

The officer, a 33-year-old Westland resident, has been with the department more than nine years and is currently a patrol sergeant.

"The FBI is handling this.

"We're not saying anything," said Deputy Police Chief Michael Lindman. "I will confirm the officer is on leave pending investigation. It's a paid leave at this time."

A spokesperson for the U.S. Attorney's Office also refused to make any comment on the search warrant or the investigation.

CORRECTION

In the Thursday, Jan. 19, issue of the *Westland Observer*, Danielle Haase of the Wayne-Westland girls gymnastics team should have been listed as a fifth-place finisher on the balance beam with a score of 8.2 in a 141.25-106.00 loss to Livonia Unified.

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Helping to heal

Church volunteers hit the road to help Katrina victims rebuild

"I had a glimpse of what the world looked like through our Heavenly Father's eyes ... and I cried."

Kristyn Pillitteri
NorthRidge
Church volunteer

BY BRAD KADRICH
STAFF WRITER

Kristyn Pillitteri and others at NorthRidge Church were affected by the devastation inflicted by Hurricane Katrina last fall about the same way most other Americans were: Sadness, sympathy for the victims, an "I wish there was something I could do to help" feeling.

Instead of feeling the feeling fleetingly and then letting it pass and moving on with their lives, Pillitteri, a Livonia resident, and more than 150 other volunteers clambered into rented vans, headed in seven different teams over two months to Kiln, Miss., to help victims start reclaiming their lives.

That is when the level of devastation - and the feeling of hopelessness left in its wake - became exceedingly clear.

"The mission ... became real to us when we not only witnessed the overwhelming destruction, but the overwhelming pain," Pillitteri wrote in a letter to friends and family when she returned. "The devastation throughout was horrific. It was incredibly sad, to say the least."

Pillitteri, and the other NorthRidge volunteers, were in Kiln because of the church's desire to "put hands and feet" to their assistance. In the immediate wake of the hurricanes, NorthRidge did its part to help from afar, donating some \$25,000 and sending some 27,000 pounds of food to the storm-ravaged area.

HANDS AND FEET

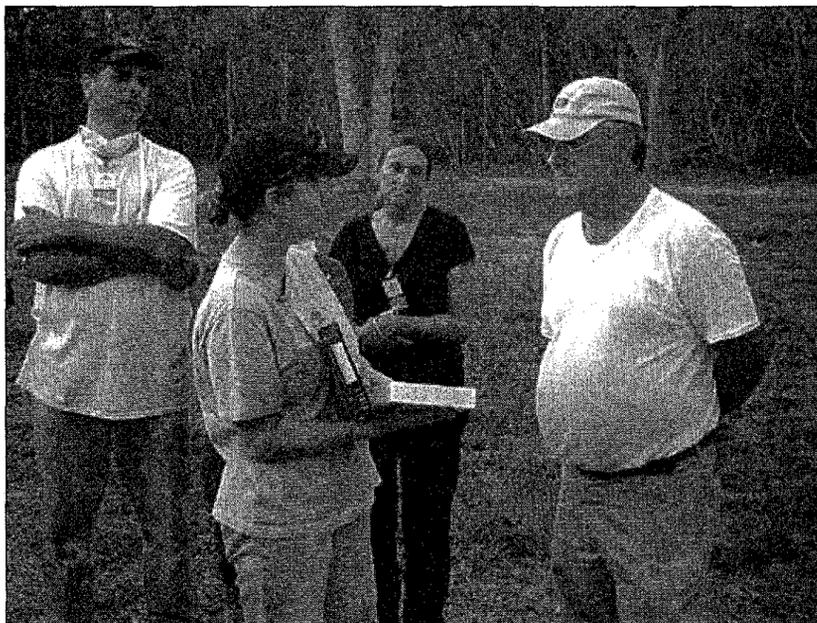
In the end, though, church officials leaned on one of their core values: The idea you have to do what you can to help the hurting, the poor and the sick.

"As soon as (the hurricane) happened, we knew we were going to respond, (and) initially we sent money, but that's not what we're all about," said Beth Harris, NorthRidge's outreach coordinator. "It wasn't enough. You can do all you want from afar, but we wanted to put hands and feet to it. We went down and lived this disaster."

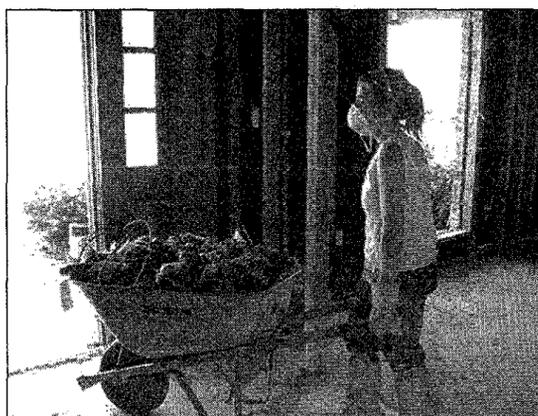
NorthRidge had already worked on other programs with Samaritan's Purse, the international relief organization headed by Franklin Graham, the son of the Rev. Billy Graham. Samaritan's Purse was leading relief efforts in the Gulf Coast region, so partnering again seemed "like a natural fit," according to Harris.

The first order of business: Find volunteers. No problem; hundreds of people signed up. Next order of business was organizing the teams. Seven different teams of varying sizes were assembled, with all volunteers actually paying \$150 for the privilege of going.

Through Samaritan's Purse, NorthRidge hooked up with a



Tom Ray of Novi (left), and Kim Ollar and Karen Contreras of Canton give Kiln, Miss., resident Lee Klein a Bible signed by NorthRidge team members during a trip to help residents of the hurricane-ravaged area.



NorthRidge Church member Shannon Botsford of Howell wheels a load of debris from a Kiln, Miss., home during the church's volunteer relief trip to the Hurricane Katrina-ravaged Gulf Coast.

church in Kiln, where volunteers slept on cots, showered in trailers and cooked meals in a makeshift kitchen.

HARD WORK

That was at night. During the day, they were in hurricane-damaged homes, tearing down drywall, gutting houses and hauling mounds of waste to the garbage. The amount of work needed at first overwhelmed the volunteers.

"I expected to see a lot of devastation, but I didn't expect it to be so widespread," said Daryl Urban, a mason contractor from Westland who was down there in November. "We had teams down there before us who tried to explain it, but there really aren't any words."

The teams started work on Monday morning, going eight hours a day through Friday evening doing what they called a "full mud-out." According to Harris, the teams took the homes, which hadn't been touched since the hurricane hit Labor Day weekend, from attic to slab.

Everything had to go, including furniture, clothing, appliances, toilets, sinks and tubs. They removed drywall, wood paneling, insulation, ceilings

and flooring. And much of it was done under the watchful eye of the homeowners, who had a hand in the decision on what might be salvageable.

"You had to be careful, because you were throwing their lives to the curb," said Paolo Ivanov of Northville, a volunteer who made the trip less than six months after undergoing a quadruple bypass operation. "It's easy to become insensitive, because that's the job you're there to do."

The job was hard for the residents to watch, at least at first. According to the volunteers, many of them still seemed to be in a bit of shock over the events, a little put off by the fact these strangers were poring through their belongings.

EMBRACING AID

However, they said, it didn't take them long to warm up.

"It was very difficult ... some of them were a bit standoffish at first," Urban said. "They knew we were coming in to clean out their belongings. Sometimes it took them a couple of days to understand we were there to help."

More than anything, it was the people who affected the NorthRidge teams the most. There was "Pizza Man Tony," a homeowner who insisted on providing doughnuts and pizza, despite the volunteers' pledge not to accept anything from the people they were there to help. There was Diane and her family, living in a FEMA trailer on the property.

And then there was Jimmy, an "80-ish" man who has lived in Kiln his whole life. A victim of polio, Jimmy told volunteers

he rode out the storm for 14 hours in 175 mph winds atop his home.

"He'd lost his wife a few months earlier," Pillitteri said, tears welling in her eyes. "He told us he was thankful for that, because he didn't think he'd have been able to save her."

The experience left the NorthRidge volunteers feeling blessed to have been a part of it.

"We saw just in the week we were there 16 houses were done," the Livonia woman said. "It was life-changing. I know that sounds like a cliché. It changed me more than it changed them."

LOOKING AHEAD

Those experiences left the volunteers headed down with NorthRidge's second wave of teams - the first of which leaves next week - eager to help. For Deb Gering, an operating room nurse from Canton who'd just visited New Orleans for a conference months before the hurricane, it was tough watching on television as people struggled in the aftermath.

"It was hard for me to wrap my head around seeing all those people suffering," said Gering, clinical manager of the OR at Sinai-Grace Hospital in Detroit. "I had a friend who went, and the stories she told blew me away. My compassion for people makes me want to go. God is telling me, 'It's your turn.'"

Kelly Murphy-Smith of Northville has been where the people of the Gulf Coast have been, having once lost her home to a fire. She and her husband, both firefighter/paramedics, both wanted to help. Her husband went in November; Murphy-Smith is scheduled to go next month.

"I know what it's like to feel alone, because there was no one to help me," said Murphy-Smith, now a stay-at-home mom. "It's a blessing to be going, because people think the work there is done. People think things are getting finished. But there's not a lot of people going down there."

Despite the grueling work and the long schedule, teacher Angela Oliver of Canton is looking forward to going next month.

"I immediately felt, 'I wish I could go,' but there was no way I could go at that time of year," said Oliver, who teaches math at West Middle School in Plymouth. "I was like, 'OK, God doesn't want me to go yet.' (Now) I think I'm more excited about where I'm going on vacation than anyone I work with."

That level of enthusiasm doesn't surprise pastor Brad Powell. "We believe in it, it's the essence of who we are," Powell said. "The vast majority of people are searching for significance and coming up short. What we do is cast the vision that we get to be a part of something. This is about providing hope and about representing Christ. It's not hard when these people have experienced it themselves."

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Throwing a 'super' party

Couple knows how to entertain out-of-town guests

BY KURT KUBAN
STAFF WRITER

When Angela Story-Krug first heard the Super Bowl was coming to Detroit, the first thing she did was contact Roger Penske, who is the head of the Super Bowl XL Host Committee, to see if she could be of some service in the planning of the big game.

The former employee of Disney World knew what a big deal the Super Bowl was going to be to Detroit, and potentially to her own career. Unfortunately, at the time of her call, Penske informed Story-Krug that they were not yet in the planning process and there wasn't anything for her to do.

After the call, she didn't give the Super Bowl much more thought for a couple years. Instead, she and her husband, Tom Krug, decided to form a company to take advantage of the production training they had acquired working for Disney World in Orlando, where the two first met.

In fact, Tom, who was born and raised in New York City, worked for Disney's special events department, and was even involved in the planning and building of Epcot Center back "when there were just dirt roads" in the area. Angela, who grew up in the Wayne-Westland area, got a job at Disney right out of college.

After the two met, they hit it off and married. In 1999, they moved into her grandmother's home on Sheldon Road in Canton, and started the company, Event Source Productions. It is a live show production company. That can range from anything like putting together banquets and corporate meetings, to producing product launches or even political rallies. In fact, last year, they organized seven fund-raisers for Vice President Dick Cheney in 16 days in four states, as well as a recent visit by President George W. Bush to the Detroit Economic Club.

You might say they know how to throw a party.

Which brings us back to the Super Bowl. As the big game got closer and closer, the couple knew what it would mean to the Detroit region, and they just wanted to be involved somehow.

Then they met Rick Rachner, of REM Marketing Group, who was trying to promote some parties for the wave of out-of-towners that he knew would be coming because of the Super Bowl. He just wasn't sure where or how to put on a large-scale party. It was a marriage made in heaven.

Together, they found a vacant, 30,000-square-foot building near Cobo Hall, named it the Vault, and Rachner began booking parties for the week of the Super Bowl, which the Krugs are producing. There are a total of four high-profile affairs, beginning on Feb. 2 and running through Feb. 5, which is the day of the Super Bowl.

On Feb. 2, they are producing a party called "South Beach Affair", which will feature four of Miami's most-popular DJs and will cost \$300 to get in the door.

A day later, they are putting on a party for Hawaiian Tropic, which costs \$500 for tickets and will feature the Hawaiian Tropic Girls.

On Feb. 4, they are throwing a party for Penthouse, which costs \$1,250 for tickets, and on Feb. 5, the Taste of Detroit Tailgate Party, which costs \$250.

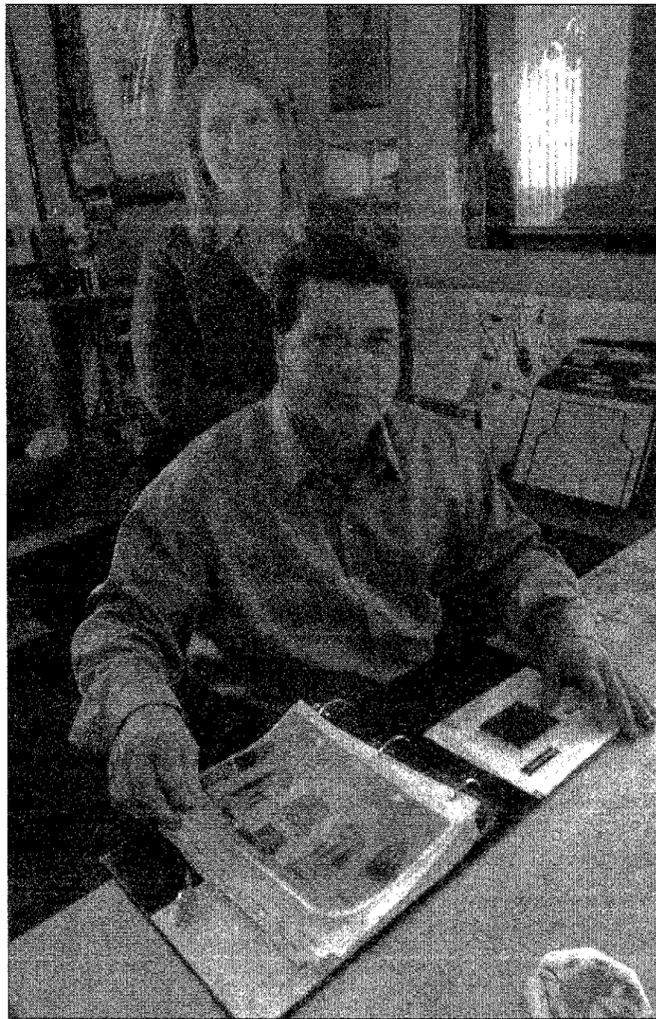
The Krugs expect the parties to be attended by both local and out-of-town celebrities.

"We've heard all kinds of rumor," said Angela, 35.

Angela said the couple has been working very hard decorating the Vault, including putting up lighting, building stages, and creating a party ambiance that she hopes will really knock the socks off those who attend the party. She realizes it's a huge opportunity for them.

"This will be the largest thing we've done up to this point," she said.

Just like this is a great chance for them, Tom Krug said the Super Bowl is a great opportunity for the region to change the national perception about



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Angela Story-Krug and husband Tom Krug, who live in Canton and own Event Source Productions, are producing several high-profile parties in conjunction with the Super Bowl.

Detroit. And they want to do their part, by making sure the partygoers never forget how much fun they had.

"Since we moved here, we have felt Detroit could be something better, and this is the chance to change some of that," he said. "We want them (visitors) to have such a great time in Detroit they will come back. We want them to have a better time than they've ever had."

The Vault is located at 151 W. Fort

Street, at the corner of Shelby, about a block from Cobo Hall. To purchase tickets for any of the parties at the Vault or for more information, call (866) 666-6222 or visit the Web site, www.thevaultdetroit.com.

For more information about Event Source Productions, call (734) 398-9700, or visit their Web site at www.eventsourcepro.com.

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Party helps kick off 2006 Relay for Life

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

In hopes of raising more than \$103,000, organizers of Westland's next cancer-fighting Relay for Life event are preparing to start their money-raising campaign.

A kickoff ceremony is scheduled for 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15, at Papa Joe's Bar & Grill, 34275 Ford Road near Wildwood, said spokeswoman Kelly Salingue.

The kickoff party will celebrate the lives of those who have beat the disease, and survivor Everett Lawrence will talk about his experience.

The kickoff event also will have a sports theme and will offer information that Relay for Life teams can use to start their fund-raising efforts, Salingue said.

"People are welcome to come and find out how they can be part of the event," she said.

A 24-hour event, Westland Relay for Life is scheduled to start at 10 a.m. Saturday, June 10, in the city's Thomas H. Brown Central City Park, near Ford and Carlson.

Many participants will camp out overnight in the park. The event will include, among other activities, an entertainment stage and a solemn ceremony remembering those who lost their lives to cancer.

Relay for Life organizers are hoping to get at least 30 teams to participate in this year's event. Teams will accept pledges and plan various ways of raising money.

Relay for Life will benefit the American Cancer Society. For more information, call ACS representative Jenny McFarlane at (248) 483-4343.

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Florida Grape Tomatoes
2/\$4.00

Naturipe Fresh Blueberries
2/\$4.00
8 oz. pkg.

Idaho Potatoes
\$1.99
10 lb. bag

Umani Ronchi Montepulciano d' Abruzzo
\$10.99 750 ml.
This is an easy drying-low acid wine!

Huntsman Double Gloucester with Blue Stilton
\$10.99 lb.
Suitable for vegetarians

ZaZa Semi-Sweet Hungarian Merlot
\$9.99 750 ml.
Sweet with a clean quick finish!

T. Marzetti's Dips
\$2.99 ea.
Great for parties! 15 oz. container

Alpine Lace Swiss Cheese
\$4.89 lb.
Low Sodium with a nutty earthy flavor

Bareman's French Onion Chip Dip
79¢ each
8 oz. Container

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Seafood • Deli**

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Cat's meow: Persian Tabby Fanciers bring show to area

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

It will literally be the cat's meow at the Wayne Ford Civic League this weekend when the Midwest Persian Tabby Fanciers present their all-breed cat show.

Pedigree felines from around the country as well as household pets will be featured in the show Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 28-29, at the hall, 1645 Wayne Road south of Ford in Westland.

"There's 37 breeds recognized by the CFA (Cat Fanciers Association) and there may be that many at the show," said Cathy Hawley, a member of the Midwest group. "We expect 225 cats and kittens. It'll be a medium-sized show."

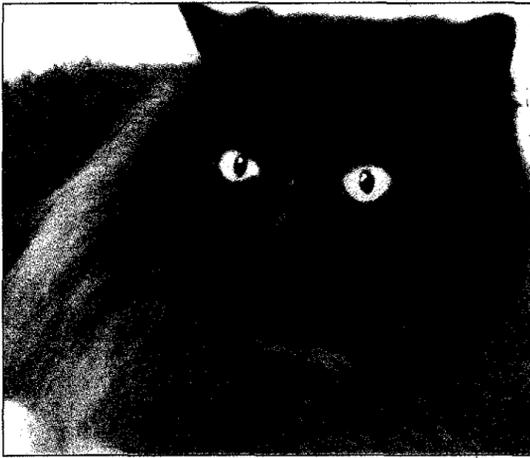
Like the popular Detroit Kennel Club dog show, when not being judged, cats and kittens will be in cages for the public to see. Their owners will be on hand to answer questions about their felines and the breed. There also will be kittens for sale and vendors.

Pedigree cats will be judged to breed standard, with judges looking at such things as the shape of the eyes and ears, coat, eye color and fur color, Hawley said. At the end of the show, judges will pick the top 10 cats to select the all-breed winner.

They will compete for championship points. They begin in open class working their way up to champion and then grand champion. Neutered pedigree cats like Hawley's black Persian Dulcimer Merlin earn points to become premier and eventually grand premier felines.

"The points earned depend on how many cats are in a show and how well they place," Hawley said. "People will come from California, Florida and everywhere in between, but they'll check for a show with the most entries. If they place, they get more points."

Household cats are judged



The youngster of Cathy Hawley's four Persian Tabby cats is grand premier Dulcimer Merlin, a three-year-old neutered black male.

on behavior, condition and temperament and receive ribbons and trophies.

The Midwest Persian Tabby Fanciers has been around as a club since 1981 and sponsors a minimum of one all-breed show each year. It's dedicated to preserving and promoting the Persian Tabby cat, educating people about breeding and showing Persians, promoting sportsmanship and working to protect the interest of all cats.

The money the club raises supports the welfare of animals, especially cats. Donations have gone to the Feline Endowment Fund at Michigan State University, the Detroit Zoo's Big Cat exhibit, Michigan Humane Society, Michigan Animal Rescue League and Huron Valley Animal Shelter.

The CFA is the largest registry of pedigree cats in the world and like the Midwest Persian Tabby Fanciers, it is committed to promoting the welfare of all cats, improvement of breeds and registration of pedigreed cats and kittens. It also maintains a Disaster Relief Fund to provide

financial and logistical assistance at times of natural and human disasters.

Hawley has had cats her entire life, but has been showing cats for only eight years. After the death of her first Persian, she went looking for a new cat and was directed by a friend to a person who had been doing shows for 25 years.

She had a hard time selecting a cat - "They were all beautiful," - and went to a few shows. She started with two cats and now has four. Merlin is the youngster at age 3.

Hawley learned how to groom cats for show and started working with Merlin when he was a kitten.

"Merlin purrs when he gets a bath, he thinks he's getting a massage," the Clarkston resident said of the show grooming routine.

The show is open to the public 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for senior citizens and \$4 for children. For more information about the show, call Hawley at (248) 393-1986.

smason@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2112

FORD

FROM PAGE A1

Auto industry job losses will trickle down to retail stores, restaurants, grocery stores and other businesses, said Hillman, an Inkster resident.

Although some 6,800 workers in Wayne escaped the company ax Monday, they mourned job losses suffered elsewhere by Ford employees.

"The mood is always bad in a situation like this, regardless of where you lose the jobs," said Jeff Washington, Local 900 president. "There was a certain amount of relief here - if that's what you want to call it. But, the threat is there that we could be one of the plant closings still to be announced."

Washington, a 59-year-old Belleville resident, said Wayne workers are hopeful that Ford will bring a new product to their facilities to boost production and heighten job security.

Graunstadt, meanwhile, has worked for Ford Motor Co. for nearly 30 years - 18 of them at the Wixom plant. He could be placed elsewhere, but he also could lose some Social Security benefits if forced out of a job before he is 55.

"It's so early in the game, I don't know what's going to happen," Graunstadt said Tuesday.

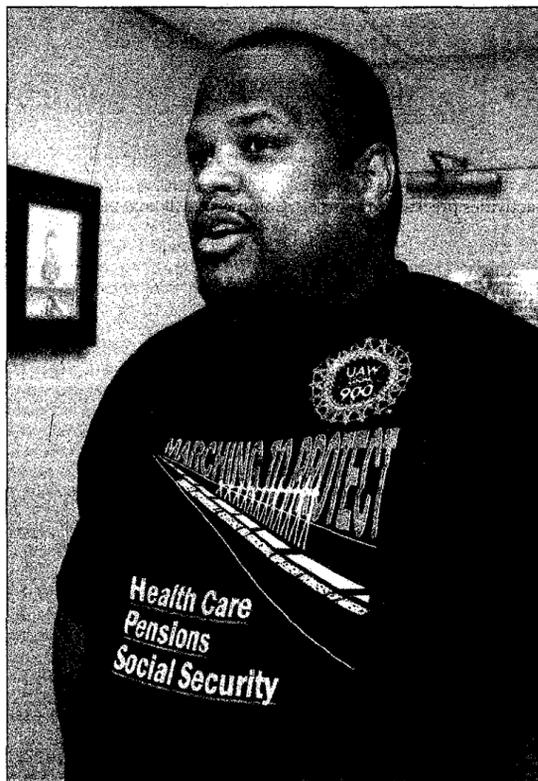
Wixom workers come from many local communities, including Westland, Garden City, Livonia, Canton, Plymouth and Redford, he said. They had heard prior to Monday that they could lose their jobs.

SADNESS

"Even though I think everybody was prepared because of all the media attention, I still think they were pretty much in shock," Graunstadt said. "They were very stoic, very professional when the news was delivered."

"I feel terrible about it," he said. "It's a tremendous loss to the employees, to the economy and to the entire surrounding area. For every auto worker who gets laid off, there are a number of other people who will lose their jobs."

He cited auto parts suppliers but also said that reduced tax revenues could affect police and fire services in some communities.



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

As hourly worker, Jason Hillman sees it, 'A job could be here today and gone tomorrow.'

Graunstadt expressed particular concern for Ford employees who have fewer years on the job, and he voiced broader concerns that middle-class jobs are being eroded. He and his wife, Cheryl, a Westland City Council member, have three grown daughters, and two of them live at home.

"What do my kids have to look forward to?" Graunstadt said. "I see generations of people losing the jobs that their fathers and their grandfathers had."

The Wixom plant makes the Lincoln Town Car and the Lincoln LS, but production on the latter vehicle is expected to halt in mid-April, he said.

The Michigan Truck Plant in Wayne makes the Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator, and the Wayne Assembly Plant produces the Ford Focus.

'WAKE UP'

Sam Beydoun, a 10-year

truck plant worker who came to the United States from Lebanon when he was only 3, said he encourages his friends to buy American-made cars.

"I won't even let a foreign car park in my driveway," said Beydoun, a Dearborn Heights resident with a wife and three children.

"People need to wake up and realize what's going on," he said. "A lot of us are still hoping that we won't lose our jobs. But most of the workers are very concerned."

Inside the Local 900 hall, a sign posted on a window seemed to sum up the worrisome times.

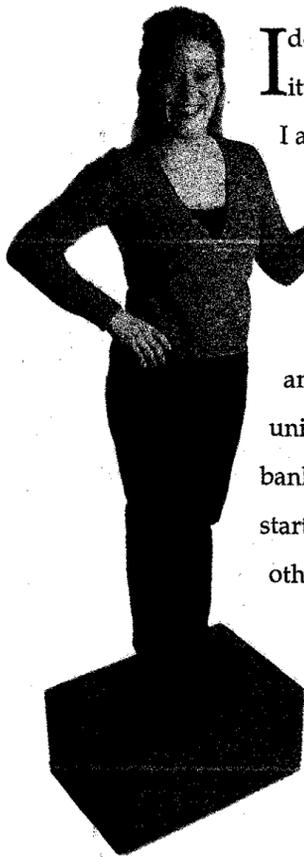
It read: UAW Local 900 is not accepting any names for possible employment. Ford has a freeze on hiring. We currently have over 6,000 names on the list.

A list, it seems, for which there are no jobs.

dclm@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2110

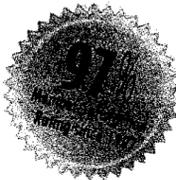
I'm not too young to save for retirement.

"MY BANK ACTED AS IF I HAD ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD."



I don't have a ton of money yet, but I know it's easier to save for retirement if I start now. I asked my banker for advice and got a handful of pamphlets instead. That's when I went to Community Choice Credit Union. They helped me consider my options, including setting up an IRA. I was surprised to learn that a credit union could do that. But they do everything my bank did - with a lot more personal interest. So I started my retirement plan and now do all my other business there too. Community Choice - they're the right choice and anyone can join.

Dena, Community Choice member, on her soapbox about financial institutions.



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Wayne-Westland Community Schools
Westland, Michigan 48185

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
RE-BID for Bid Division 113 ONLY

Sealed bids for Wayne-Westland Community Schools' Bid Package #19,

Consisting of: Wayne Memorial H.S. Athletics Program Addition, Wayne Memorial H.S. Gym Air Conditioning, Wayne Memorial H.S. Toilet Room Remodeling, David Hicks Elevator Addition

will be received until 1:30 P.M. local time on Tuesday, January 31, 2006 at which time they will be opened and read publicly at Wayne-Westland Community School Board of Education Office, located at 36745 Marquette, Westland, Michigan 48185. Bids received after this time and date will be returned unopened.

This is a Re-Bid for Bid Division 113 only. Bids for all other Bid Divisions will be returned unopened.

Faxed proposals will not be accepted.

This Bid Package will consist of a separate sealed bid for the following Bid Divisions:

113 Hollow Metal / Wood Doors / Finish Hardware (Supply)

Bidding documents prepared by TMP Associates, Inc. will be available for public inspection at the office of the Construction Manager, McCarthy & Smith, Inc., 24317 Indoplex Circle, Farmington Hills, MI 48335; the FW Dodge Plan Room, Southfield; the Construction Association of Michigan Plan Room, Bloomfield Hills; and the Daily Construction Reports Plan Room, Detroit.

Bidders may obtain one (1) set of bidding documents, beginning Friday, January 20, 2006, by contacting the Construction Manager, McCarthy & Smith, Inc., at (248) 427-8400. Additional plans may be ordered and purchased directly from Dunn Blue Reprographics Technology, (248) 353-2950. Bids are to be submitted in a sealed envelope supplied by the Construction Manager, McCarthy & Smith, Inc. The bid division(s) being bid is/are to be identified on the outside of the envelope.

A sworn and notarized statement disclosing any familial relationship existing between the bidder and any member of the school board, school superintendents, or chief executive must accompany each bid. A board shall not accept a bid that does not include this statement. This statement is on the proposal execution form.

Each bid shall be accompanied by a Bid Bond in the amount of five (5) percent of the amount of the bid, payable to Wayne-Westland Community Schools, as a guarantee that if the proposal is accepted, the bidder will execute the contract and file the required bonds within ten (10) days after notice of award of contract.

If awarded a contract, the successful bidder will be required to furnish a Performance Bond and Labor and Material Payment Bond. Wayne-Westland Community Schools reserve the right to reject any or all bids received and to waive any informalities and irregularities in the bidding.

This project is to be bid at the prevailing wage rate.

Publish: January 26 & 29, 2006

CE060109827

Get on the ball. Read today's **SPORTS** coverage!

Tailgate party

Residents of three American Houses in Westland are inviting friends, neighbors and family to be their guests for parties at 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 5, celebrating the Big Game.

Each American House will celebrate with chili, nachos, chips, dip and beverages during activities preceding the 6:18 p.m. kickoff.

The free tailgate parties are open to the public. Attendees can reserve a spot by calling American House Presidential Assistant Robert W. Gillette at (877) 266-0877, or online at www.americanhouse.com.

"The tailgate parties are American House's way of showing support for the Detroit metro area as it hosts football fans, the media, and thousands of V.I.P. visitors for this important event," American House President J. Robert Gillette said.

In Westland, There are American House at 1660 Venoy, 39201 Joy Road and 35700 Hunter.

Chocolate Fantasy

Tickets are on sale for the second annual Westland ATHENA Award Chocolate Fantasy Ball Saturday, Feb. 11, at the New Hawthorne Valley Country Club, 7300 Merriman, Westland.

Tickets are \$75 per person and include cocktails at 6 p.m., followed by a strolling dinner at 6:30 p.m., award presentation 7:30 p.m. and dancing to the music of White Lace.

Tickets are available at Mary Denning's Cake Shoppe on Wayne Road north of Cowan - (734) 261-3680 - or through the mayor's office at Westland City Hall - (734) 467-3200.

Scrapbooking workshop

Ss. Simon and Jude Parish will be the site of a scrapbooking workshop 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25. The cost is \$35 per person for a full day and \$20 per person for a half day. For more information, call Sandy Kopcak at (734) 721-4867 or Karen Kopcak at (734) 634-3934 or by e-mail at kholienbeck@twmi.rr.com.

Cropping fund-raiser

A scrapbook fund-raiser, Croppin' for the Edison Eagles, will be held 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 11, in the gymnasium of St. Matthew Lutheran School and Church, 5885 Venoy, Westland. The cost is \$35 and includes a light breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and beverages, scrapbooking and stamping vendors, raffles and much more.

Call Kelly Salter at (734) 891-0219 or e-mail kelly@bellcreek.org for more information or to register.

Be my Valentine

Moms can kick up their heels and Dads can bring a sparkle to the eyes of their princesses when the Westland Parks and Recreation Department holds its annual Mother-Son and Daddy-Daughter Hoedown and Fairy Princess Ball.

The hoedown will be 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7. There will be special dances, a souvenir photo and refreshments. Tickets cost \$10 per couple and \$5 for each additional daughter or son. They're available through Feb. 5. No tickets will be sold at the door.

There will be two sessions of the Fairy Princess Ball - 3:40-5:30 p.m., 5:30-7 p.m. - Saturday, Feb. 4. The magical event includes a souvenir photo and refreshments. Cost is \$15 per couple and \$7 for each additional daughter. A corsage also is available for \$8. Tickets and corsages must be paid for by Feb. 1. No tickets or corsages will be sold at the door.

Tickets are available at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford. For more information, call (734) 722-7620.

Open House

St. Michael Lutheran S has two open houses planned for February for parents interested in enrolling in the preschool and/or school. The preschool open house is 5:30-7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6, while the school open house and registration will be 5:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23.

For more information, call (734) 728-3315.

Spaghetti dinner

The Westland Youth Athletic Association U14 Lightning

softball team will hold a fund-raiser spaghetti dinner 4-7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 29, at the AMVETS Hall, 1711 Merriman, Westland. Cost is \$7 for all you can eat. There also will be a raffle, drawings and bake sale.

Charity bowling

The Westland Chamber of Commerce will hold 2006 Winterfest charity bowling event 1-5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25, at Westland Bowl, 5940 N. Wayne Road. Partial proceeds benefit the Joseph F. Benyo Scholarship Fund.

Registration is at 12:30 p.m. with the tournament starting at 1 p.m. Four-person teams will bowl, alternating every fourth frame. Cost is \$120 per

team or \$30 per person. Price includes bowling, two well drinks and dinner buffet after the tournament at Marvaso's Italian Grille, 6569 N. Wayne Road. For more information, call the chamber at (734) 326-7222.

Vegas Nights

St. Theodore Parish's Confraternity of Christian Women and Men's Club will have Vegas Nights 6 p.m. to midnight Friday-Saturday, Feb. 3-4, at the church, 8200 N. Wayne Road, Westland.

There will be 50/50 drawings and tear-offs every hour. black jack, easy craps and Let It Ride. Wine and soft drinks will be available. Maximum

win will be \$500 per person. For more information, call (734) 425-4421.

Banner presentation

American Legion Westland Post 251 will presenting its Blue Star Banner to families who have a member currently serving in the Armed Forces.

The banner will be presented at the Westland City Council meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6.

Families in the Westland and Canton areas who have members currently serving in the Armed Forces to contact the post at (734) 326-2607.

Las Vegas Party

St. Bernardine Men's Club is

sponsoring a Pinochle/Euchre Card Party on Fridays, Jan. 27 and Feb. 3, 17 and 24, at the church, southwest corner Ann Arbor Trail and Merriman in Westland.

Participants don't need a partner to play. Snacks and soft drinks are included in the \$5 charge. Games start at 7:30 p.m.

Singers needed

Do you like singing religious music, Kirk of Our Savior on Cherry Hill west of Wayne Road, Westland, is looking for singers for its adult (ages 13 and up) traditional choir. All Christian faiths and all voice ranges are welcome.

Rehearsals are at 7 p.m.

Thursdays. For more information, call Tim at (734) 718-8733 or the church at (734) 728-1088.

Car donations

People with a car to donate can give it to Veterans Haven. The organization is accepting cars, running or not running, that are given to veterans to provide them with transportation to work, school of medical needs.

To date, the agency has given away more than 250 vehicles and three fully furnished mobile homes to needy veterans. To donate, call Veterans Haven at (734) 728-0527 or go to vetshaveninfo.org on the Internet.

2 DAYS ONLY

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Anderson backs insurance reform

A Westland lawmaker has joined his Democratic colleagues in sponsoring legislation that will fight the rising cost of insurance in Michigan by lowering its cost, strengthening consumer protections and improving industry accountability.

"Under this plan, families will have access to affordable and reliable insurance, which is crucial to their financial security," said state Rep. Glenn S. Anderson, D-Westland. "Families struggling to make ends meet should not have to choose between heating their homes and having insurance to protect themselves and their loved ones."

"This plan ensures that insurance will be fairly priced and available to our families."

The Democratic package consists of 20 initiatives that will strengthen regulations to bring

fair, affordable and accessible auto and homeowners' insurance to Michigan citizens.

The package addresses three primary areas of concern - rates, consumer protection and industry accountability.

A recent report by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners on the average cost of auto insurance rates found that rates in Michigan are the 10th highest in the nation and the highest in the Midwest.

Among other things, the Democratic reform package will:

- Require insurance companies to immediately roll back rates by 20 percent.

- Provide stronger tools to the Insurance Commissioner in determining where rates are excessive and ordering refunds where found.

- Provide flexibility in setting

base rates to provide more affordably priced insurance.

- Establish an Office of Insurance Ratepayer Advocate to represent and protect the interests of consumers.

- Prohibit insurance companies from using an individual's credit history or credit score for determining insurance rates.

"This package of bills represents the most comprehensive reform of Michigan insurance laws in more than 20 years," Anderson said. "Our families need insurance reform."

"Insurance companies must not be allowed to run up the costs on consumers simply to protect their profits. This plan holds insurance companies accountable and protects our consumers."



Anderson

Career tech center holds open house

Students and parents will have a chance to see what goes on inside the William D. Ford Career Technical Center in Westland at an open house on Thursday, Feb. 9.

The center's annual winter Open House-Technology Expo will be 6-8:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

Visitors will have the opportunity to see student projects and activities from all 23 technical programs, sample foods prepared by the culinary arts, meet program instructors, and interact with college and industry representatives.

Displays of current, high efficient, state-of-the-art technology in home heating and cooling will be presented by various companies serving on the center's HVAC advisory board. Counselors also will be available to conduct tours and answer questions about enrollment opportunities.

Door prizes will be awarded throughout the evening.

For more information, call the center at (734) 419-2100. The William D. Ford Career Technical Center is at 36455 Marquette, west of Road, in Westland.

CITY OF WESTLAND SYNOPSIS OF MINUTES MTG. 2-1/17/06

Presiding: Council President Wild

Present: Godbout, Graunstadt, Kehrer, LeBlanc, Pickering, Stottlmyer, 29-Approved minutes of regular meeting held on 1/3/06.

- Granted request from Mich. Chptr. of H.O.G. for 2006 Troy Run 9/24/06.

- Approved bid from Denmark Heating & Cooling for furnace for Octagon House amt. \$5,437.00.

- Introduction of Budget Amendment 2006-05, General Funds, amt. \$20,499.00.

- Introduction of Budget Amendment 2005-06, Library Funds, amt. \$20461.18.

- Approved Workers comp. Adm. Contract w/Alt. Serv. Concepts for two years.

- Approved Renewal of Excess Wrkrs. Comp. Ins w/Safety Nat'l Casualty for 1 yr.

- Adopted Prep. Land Div. Res., Parcel #048-01-0050-000, 229 Parent, w. side of Parent, n. of Cherry Hill, w. of Wayne.

- Adopted Prep. Land Div. Res., Parcel #069-01-0072-000 thru -0076-000, s. side Steinhauer, e. of Merriman, s. of Cherry Hill.

- Adopted Prep. Land Div. Res., Parcel #061-01-0437-300, n. side Somers, s. of Cherry Hill, w. of Venoy.

- Approved Declaration of Intent to Reimburse for Water & Sewer Sys. Rev. Bonds, Series 2006.

30-Approved request for closed study session after mtg. to discuss pending litigation.

31-Approved prop. vacation & abandonment of public easement for watermain, 36410 Newberry Estates Dr.

34-Approved rezoning from R-5 to CB-1, Parcel #027-01-0025-0001, n. side Ford, w. of Newburgh.

35-Approved Site Plan for Comm. Ctr., Parcels #028-01-0023-000, -0024-001, -0025-001 and -0025-002, n. side Ford, w. of Newburgh.

36-Approved City Clerk Benefit Package Plan, 1-1 thru 12-31-06.

37-Approved amended Dep. City Clerk Benefit Package Plan, 1-1 thru 12-31-06.

38-Confirmed re-appointment of E. Johnson, E. Lamp, J. Mason, M. Rawson, K. Reeves, M. Troup & P. Valovick to the P & R Adv. Bd.

39-Confirmed re-appointment of Plakas & Associates as City Attorney, 1-1-06 thru 12-31-07.

40-Confirmed re-appointment of R. Kosowski, Parks & Rec. Dir., 1-1-06 to 12-31-07.

41-Confirmed re-appointment of B. Thompson, Planning Dept. Dir., 1-1-06 to 12-31-07.

42-Appointed Plante & Moran as City Auditors, 1-1 to 12/31/06.

43-Approved bid from Midwestern Sanitation Refuse Collection thru 6/30/10.

44-Approved bid from Observer & Eccentric, for Official Newspaper thru 1/1/07.

45-Approved Voucher List: Check list: \$700,762.61 and Prepaid: \$1,743,057.49.

Meeting adjourned at: 9:10 p.m.

Minutes available at the Clerk's office.

William R. Wild
Council President

EILEEN DEHART
City Clerk

Publish: January 26, 2006

CE08407375

INFORMATION CENTRAL

January is National Yours, Mines, and Ours Month focusing on what can be expected as a step or blended family.

Especially for teens, this can present difficult times and, luckily, there's lots of great teen fiction written on the subject with problem-solving as the main outcome.

Susan Beth Pfeffer, for example, has written about two best friends in *Make Believe* whose families have always been very close. So, when one of their parents separate, it deeply affects their friendship.

Laura and Tom McNeal in *Zipped* look intensely at four teenagers as they start new jobs, deal with changing friendships, and find love - and all in the midst of being part of stepfamilies.

Then, talk about soap opera! Try

Caroline Cooney's *Tune in Anytime* when Sophie's father suddenly decides to divorce her mother and marry her sister's college roommate.

For more edgy stories, Gary Paulsen wrote his infamous *Hatchet* which not only deals with a 13-year-old boy who must learn how to survive 54 days in the wilderness after a plane crash, but also his parents' divorce.

And Sharon Draper in her *Forged by Fire* gives a head-spinning take on how a teenage boy protects his half-sister from their abusive father.

How about maintaining normalcy in the home, like having rules? In *Girls Out Late* by Jacqueline Wilson, Ellie misses curfew by going to a park with a boy she just met and must face the consequences of lying to her father and stepmother.

Or how about families who live far apart? Annabel goes from her home in Manhattan to visit her father, his new wife, and step-siblings all the way in Australia in *The Steps* by Rachel Cohn.

There are many more titles in the young adult collection here at the library that deal with the conflicts and ultimate resolutions of making families yours, mine, and ours. Call (734) 326-6123 for more information.

Travel on the Internet: 2 p.m. Jan. 29.

Feeling the need to get away from the snow and cold? Learn how to plan your trip using the Internet.

The William P. Faust Public Library is at 6123 Central City Parkway, Westland. For more information, call (734) 326-6123.

Win a chance to bowl with NFL legends

If you are a creative wordsmith and have a good idea how to spend a day in Canton's downtown business district, you might just win two complimentary tickets to bowl with some current and former NFL players and other celebrities in the first-ever Super Bowl NFL Charities Bowling Classic, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 4 at Canton's Super Bowl Lanes on Ford Road.

Two tickets to participate in the event, which are worth \$750 each, will be awarded to the two contestants who best describe, in 500 words or less, a "Super Day in Canton's DDA," illustrating how a family of four might spend an interesting day (8 a.m.-10 p.m.) patronizing some of the 300-plus business, hospitality, and entertain-

ment establishments in Canton's DDA (Downtown Development Authority) District. A list of these establishments is available on the Canton DDA Web site at <http://www.canton-mi.org/dda/dbd.asp>.

Along with the opportunity to bowl with NFL players and celebrities, the winners will also receive a limited edition commemorative Super Bowl XL bowling ball, and souvenir pin, a tote bag, official NFL Super Bowl XL apparel from Reebok, an all-day buffet and other prizes.

Entries should be addressed to Kathleen Salla, 1150 Canton Center S., Canton, MI 48188. And are due by Monday, Jan. 23. Winning entries will be creative, resourceful and realistic. For more information, please call (734) 394-5186.



REGISTRATION

is still open!

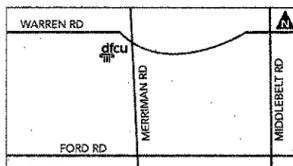
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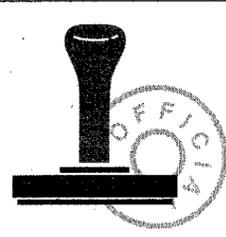
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*Limited time. Drawings to be held on December 22, 2005, January 21, 2006 and February 11, 2006. Entries only available at the Garden City branch. No purchase required. Entries accepted up to the end of the business day February 11. One entry per individual. Each entry good for all three drawings. **Minimum deposit required to receive quoted APY is \$1,000. Penalties apply for early withdrawal. All rates subject to change without notice.

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CE08405112



For the Record appears in every edition of the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's newspaper in *Passages* on page C10.

A
Julie M. Atkinson
Atkinson, 83, of Clarkston, formerly of Bloomfield Hills, died Jan. 20.

B
Eleanor Ruth Bank (nee Rodman)
Bank, 70, of Jerusalem, died Jan. 18.

E
John C. Earle
Earle, 77, died Jan. 17.

H
Karl Hanyi, M.D.
Hanyi, 81, of Plymouth, died Jan. 21.

J
Charles Jetchick
Jetchick, 81, died Jan. 19.

K
Clarence A. Kaechle
Kaechle, of Beverly Hills and Siesta Key, Fla., died Jan. 5.

L
Elerious Ludger King
King, 77, of Troy, died Jan. 21.

L
Richard (Dick) Lannin
Lannin, 70, of Garden City, died Jan. 18.

M
William "Bill" Matich
Matich, 65, of South Lyon, formerly of Plymouth, died Jan. 20.

P
Martina "Tina" G. McQuillan
McQuillan, 74, of Clarkston, died Jan. 22.

P
Evelyn Pappas
Pappas, died Jan. 21.

R
Anthony Pietrzak
Pietrzak, 76, of Livonia, died Jan. 11.

R
Sister Mary Cecile Ripslinger, RSM
Sister Ripslinger, 90, of Farmington Hills, died Jan. 18.

W
Michael James Ryder
Ryder, 5 months, died Jan. 19.

W
Jean Ellen Whitney
Whitney died Jan. 13.

W
Dorothy C. Woodward
Woodward, 80, of Livonia, died Jan. 17.

FIRE

FROM PAGE A1

According to Jones, there were seven children and four adults in the house when the fire started. He and investigators agreed that the fire started in one bedroom and then spread to an adjacent bedroom where the girl died. Everyone else got out.

"There was one young boy, 8 years old, who was laying in the room where the fire started," Jones said. "He told us and the fire officials and the police that he saw a man with a black ski mask standing at the window with a stick and a match in his hand. He said the man lit the stick and threw it in the window."

But Reddy said an investigation by fire officials didn't support that version.

"The glass (from the window) was consistent with how glass breaks from the heat of a fire," Reddy said.

"The child changed his story a few times on the scene about how the fire started," the chief said.

Reddy described fire investigators as "devastated" that a child was killed by fire, and a counselor was brought in to help them.

"We do feel for the family, and we're sorry for their loss," he said, but added, "We also have to let the other residents know that these accidents do happen, and in this particular case it was an accident. It wasn't an act of crime."

Jones questioned whether the fire may have been racially motivated. He said there have been other suspicious incidents in the neighborhood, including another house fire and the spray-painting of racist graffiti in some areas.

But fire officials found burn patterns and other evidence, including the remains of a cigarette lighter, that indicated the fire started in the bedroom, Reddy said.

"It's being ruled as a juvenile-set fire," he said.

The fire damaged much of the house, but didn't spread to any other homes. Reddy estimated that 15-18 firefighters responded to the blaze.

The investigation is continuing.

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†Residency restrictions apply. Includes Bonus Cash. Tax, title, license, dealer fees and optional equipment extra. Take delivery by 1/31/06. See dealer for details.

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CE0540728

Listings for the Community Calendar should be submitted in writing. They can be mailed to Sue Mason at 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, by fax at (734) 591-7279 or by e-mail at smason@oe.homecomm.net. For more information, call (734) 953-2112.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Winterfest
The City of Wayne Parks and Recreation Department will present Super Winterfest 2006 Jan. 26-28 at the Wayne Community Center, 4635 Howe, Wayne. Activities include, but are not limited to, a talent show, aquatic carnival, super ice skating spectacular, super breakfast with Beauty and the Beast, Northpole Classic Golf Tournament, 19th annual Kiddie Carnival featuring "Paws" the Detroit Tigers Mascot, Texas Hold 'Em Tournament, Winterfest Island Get Away Souper Bowl Party, Casino Night and #91 Jerry Ball Memorial Hockey Game. For information, call Jeff Rutter at (734) 721-7400.

Dinner theater
The City of Wayne and Stage Door Present "St. Humphrey's Disco Ball," an interactive comedy dinner theatre, Friday, Jan. 27, at the Wayne Community Center, 4635 Howe, Wayne. Cost is \$35 and includes the comedy performance, dinner and open bar. Doors open at 6 p.m. Call Colleen Meyer at (734) 721-7400 for more information.

HISTORIC

Pioneer trek
The Nankin Township Pioneer Trek has been designed to introduce travelers to the history of the area. Travelers will visit sites that affected the development of Westland as a community. Those who complete the trek will

receive an embroidered patch. To start the trek, first visit the Westland Historical Museum and pick up a packet. The museum is at 857 N. Wayne Road and is open 1-4 p.m. Saturdays, except before a holiday. The trek is sponsored by the Westland Historical Commission and the Friends of the Westland Museum. For information, call (734) 326-1110.

Friends of Eloise
The Friends of Eloise group meets 7 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month in the dining room of the Kay Beard Building, on Michigan between Middlebelt and Merriman. All are welcome. Call Jo Johnson, (734) 522-3918.

Friends of Museum
Friends of the Westland Historical Museum meet at 7 p.m. each month except December at the Collins House, located at the museum complex, 857 N. Wayne Road. Call Jim Franklin at (734) 595-8119. Everyone is welcome.

BINGO

VFW Bingo
Veterans of Foreign Wars 3323 Auxiliary has bingo 6:30 p.m. every Thursday at 1055 S. Wayne Road, Westland. There is a snack bar. The post has bingo at 1 p.m. every Sunday at the same place. Call (734) 326-3323.

Dems hold bingo
The Metro Wayne Democratic Club has bingo 10:45 a.m. every Monday at the Wayne Ford Civic League, on Wayne Road south of Ford in Westland. For information, call Jan or Cliff at (734) 591-1694 or Cliff at (734) 729-8681.

St. Mel Church
Bingo begins at 6:45 p.m. Fridays in St. Mel Church activities building, on Inkster Road north of Warren. Doors open at 4 p.m. Food is available.

Shamrock Bingo
Bingo begins at 11 a.m. Wednesdays at

the Knights of Columbus Hall, 35100 Van Born, east of Wayne Road in Wayne. Doors open at 9 a.m. Food is available. Proceeds go to charity. Call (734) 728-3020.

K of C Bingo
Pope John XXIII Assembly of the Knights of Columbus Council 1536 hosts bingo games at 6:45 p.m. Thursdays. The games are in the Livonia Elks Lodge, 3117 Plymouth Road, one block east of Merriman in Livonia. Call (734) 425-2246.

Metro Wayne
The Metro Wayne Democratic Club offers a bingo at the Wayne-Ford Civic League on Fridays. Doors open at 9 a.m. with bingo starting at 10:45 a.m. An all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet is available for \$3. Call Cliff Johnson at (734) 729-8681.

FOR SENIORS

Friendship Center
The Senior Resources Department (Friendship Center), 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland, offers a variety of programs for older adults. The Web site www.ci.westland.mi.us offers more information. Call (734) 722-7632.

Crochet & Knit
A crochet and knit group meets 9:30 a.m. every Thursday at the Friendship Center on Newburgh near Marquette. Beverly Kaminski is the instructor. Participants should bring a type "G" crochet hook. Those interested can sign up at the center's front desk or call (734) 722-7632.

Visually Impaired
The Visually Impaired Persons (VIPs) support group meets 12:30 p.m. every Friday at the Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland. Participants share information and meet others. Those interested in joining can be scheduled on a bus route for transportation. For information, call (734) 722-7632.

Choir
The Senior Choir, under the leadership of Robert Cassidy, is open to those who like to sing. It meets 9:30 a.m. Thursdays. Call Friendship Center, (734) 722-7632.

Hearing checks
Every third Tuesday of each month, a representative from Personalized Hearing Care of Westland will check and clean hearing aids free, 2:30 p.m. by appointment only. Call (734) 722-7632 for more information.

Exercise
Simply Jazzercise is designed for exercisers older than 40. The program provides a low to moderate workout. The exercise improves strength, flexibility, balance, posture, coordination and cardiovascular endurance. It incorporates simple dance routines with walking or

jogging patterns and resistance exercises. Wear loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes. Light weights and an exercise mat are suggested. Classes are 10:15 a.m. Monday, 5 p.m. Wednesday, 10:15 a.m. Friday, at \$3 per person per class. Sign up at the front desk at the Westland Friendship Center or call (734) 722-7632.

Travel Group
The Friendship Travel Group meets 1 p.m. the second Friday of each month (unless a large event is scheduled) in the Westland Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh. Programs include celebration of birthdays, door prizes, description of new classes or programs, speakers from tour companies, overview of day/overnight trips and refreshments. Call (734) 722-7632.

Dyer Center
The Wayne-Westland school district's Dyer Senior Adult Center offers activities Monday-Thursday at the center, on Marquette between Wayne and Newburgh roads. Mondays, Senior Chorus at 1:30 p.m.; Tuesdays, arts, crafts and needlework at 9:30 a.m.; Wednesdays, kitchen band, 10 a.m.; bingo at 1 p.m.; Thursdays, ceramics, arts, crafts at 9:30 a.m.

ORGANIZATIONS

Friends of library
The Friends of the William P. Faust Public Library organization meets at 2 p.m. the second Tuesday of each month at the library, 6123 Central City Parkway. Call (734) 326-6123. Meetings last about one hour and are open to the public. The group also holds a book sale during regular library hours at the library.

In Harmony
The Wayne Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society meets at 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays at Kirk of Our Savior Presbyterian Church, 36660 Cherry Hill, west of Wayne Road, Westland. Gentlemen interested in the chapter's Renaissance Chorus or who enjoy quartetting can call membership chairman Bob Wolf at (734) 421-1652, or attend a rehearsal.

Civil Air Patrol
Emergency service is just one of the congressionally mandated missions of the Civil Air Patrol, which includes ground and air search-and-rescue operations. The Civil Air Patrol, which is the official U.S. Air Force auxiliary, is made up of civilian volunteers. To learn more about CAP or training as an air crew or ground team member, contact the Willow Run Composite Squadron (MI-260). Call Capt. Dane Hansen, deputy commander/recruiter, at (734) 485-3021 or visit the Web site www.members.home.net/capliberators/.

Habitat help
The Western Wayne affiliate of Habitat for Humanity is seeking volunteers to help with building homes, office duties and fund-raising. No experience necessary. Training will be provided. For information, call (734) 459-7744.

Veteran's Haven
Veteran's Haven operates a car, boat, camper and real estate-donation program. Donations are tax-deductible. For information, call (734) 728-0527. Food is distributed to veterans once a month throughout the month and there is a supplemental food program 9 a.m. to noon Wednesdays. The Veteran Haven's Outreach Center 4924 S. Wayne Road two blocks south of Annapolis in Wayne. Any honorably discharged Veteran that is in need or homeless and wants a better quality of life can call (734) 728-0527.

Pet-A-Pet
The Pet-A-Pet animal visitation program provides pet therapy with the help of volunteers. Pets should be friendly, well-behaved and must have current vaccinations. There is a \$5 membership fee. Volunteer opportunities are available at Hope Nursing Care Center, 6:30 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month (Marie Johnson, (734) 326-1200), and Marquette House, 10:30 a.m. the second Wednesday of the month (Lorna Johnson, (734) 425-1681). There are also openings at Garden City Hospital, 3 p.m. the fourth Thursday of the month (Stacy Suida, (734) 458-4392).

Zonta Club
The Zonta Club of Northwest Wayne County, a service club to advance the status of women, meets every month on the fourth Monday at the Holiday Inn, Livonia. Call Pat Harris at (734) 420-2920.

Franklin PTSA
The Franklin High School PTSA is seeking members. Membership is open to those who care about the schools and the community. Members need not have a student in the school. Price is \$3 for students, \$5 for adults. Checks should be made payable to Franklin PTSA and sent to 31000 Joy, Livonia MI 48150.

Tutorial program
A tutoring program for students is offered at the Salvation Army Wayne-Westland Corps Community Center, 2300 Venoy in Westland. The program, 3:45-5:15 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays, is for students 9 and older in Wayne, Westland and Romulus. For information on participating or volunteering, call Tyrone Peterson, (734) 722-3660. Tutors need to have at least a high school education.

M.O.M.S.
M.O.M.S. Club of Canton/Westland is a

nonprofit support group for stay-at-home mothers. There are weekly events, Mom's Night Out, age-oriented play groups and more. For information, call Wendy, (734) 398-6957.

FOR YOUR HEALTH

TOPS
TOPS (Taking Off Pounds Sensibly) meets every Wednesday at St. John's Episcopal Church, 555 S. Wayne Road, Westland. Weigh-in is 6:30-7:15 p.m., with the meeting 7:30-8:30 p.m. Call Rosalie at (734) 728-0299.

Menopause & More
A Menopause & More support group for women meets 7-9 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month in Classroom 2 of the west addition of the Marian Women Center of St. Mary Mercy Hospital, 36475 Five Mile, Livonia. No registration is necessary, and the group is free of charge. Call (734) 655-1100.

Support group
A support group for people with chronic illness meets on Fridays every other week, at the Westside Mental Health Services, 32932 W. Warren, Suite 103, Westland. The support group is a service of Awareness Counseling Services. There is a \$10 for each meeting which will be facilitated by a professional. Call (734) 513-8295 or (313) 562-2800.

AIM
Anxiety or panic attacks? AIM (Agoraphobics In Motion) meets at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays at Faith Lutheran Church, 30000 Five Mile, between Middlebelt and Merriman in Livonia. AIM is a support group for those working on recovery from anxiety disorder or phobias. Call (248) 547-0400.

Angela Hospice
As part of its service to the community, Angela Hospice offers a variety of grief support groups free-of-charge to community residents. The groups are held at the Angela Hospice Care Center at 14100 Newburgh Road, Livonia, and are led by bereavement professionals and trained volunteers who aim to provide useful coping strategies and tools to facilitate the healing process.

- General Grief Support Group - Open to all losses. Meets at 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.
- Loss of a Spouse Support Group - Meets 6:30-8 p.m. the first Tuesday of each month, beginning in February.
- Women's Grief Support Group - Held each Spring and Fall. Call (734) 953-6012 for dates and times.
- Heartstrings: Parents Who Have Lost a Child - Meets 6:30-8 p.m. the first Thursday of each month. Call to register at (734) 464-2683.



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF GARDEN CITY
Notice of Filing Deadline

All Local School Board candidates who wish to seek office at the May 2, 2006 School Election, must file nominating petitions no later than:

Tuesday, February 7, 2006
before 4:00 p.m.

Petitions must be filed with the Garden City Clerk's Office located at 6000 Middlebelt Road, Garden City Michigan, 48135. Clerk's Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Allyson M. Bettis
City Clerk
City of Garden City, Michigan

Publish: January 26 & 29, 2006

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WORKED AT THE LOCAL SOUP KITCHEN

MENTOR

PICKED UP GARBAGE OFF OF THE FREEWAY
DELIVERED MEALS ON WHEELS
TUTORED A 2ND GRADER IN MATH

WALKED THE NEIGHBOR'S 2 DOGS
WENT TO VISIT WITH THE RESIDENTS AT THE NEIGHBORING HOME
RANG THE SALVATION ARMY BELL FOR A TOTAL OF 10 HOURS
RAKED LEAVES FOR THE ELDERLY PEOPLE

I AM A MENTOR FOR A THIRD GRADER

SHOVELED SNOW FOR MRS. JONES

VOLUNTEERED AT A BOOK DRIVE TO RAISE MONEY FOR CHILDREN'S LITERACY

ORGANIZED SCHOOL BLOOD DRIVE
BASKETBALL COACH FOR 5TH GRADE BOYS
VOLUNTEER

COOKED FOR HOMELESS TEENS ON THE WEEKEND
CHILDREN'S SUMMER PROGRAM ASSISTANT
WILDLIFE NURSERY VOLUNTEER

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Design teams create visions for aerotropolis

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

After being locked away for four days at the Ypsilanti Marriott Hotel, three design teams presented their visions for an "aerotropolis," the development of the area between Detroit Metro and Willow Run airports that some see as the primary engine for redeveloping southeast Michigan.

"There is no bigger development to occur in the state of Michigan," Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano said Monday at a reception to unveil the plans at the Eagle Crest Conference Auditorium at the Ypsilanti Marriott.

The teams were participants in the eighth annual Urban Design Charette sponsored by the University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning and underwritten by Wayne County, Washtenaw County, six communities around the airports and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

Doug Kelbaugh, dean of the Taubman College, describes a charette as an "illustrated brainstorm." The term literally means a small cart and derives from architecture students in 19th century Paris who would carry their projects to competitions in carts. Previous charettes have been held in Detroit and the projects were smaller challenges such as redesigning the Eastern Market and the Detroit riverfront.

The aerotropolis charette

began Friday. Nineteen professionals in urban planning, architecture, landscape architecture and engineering from around the country and 60 U-M students were divided into the three teams.

They were given a tour of the area stretching along I-94 from Romulus to Ypsilanti. John Kasarda, director of the Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise at the University of North Carolina and the leading authority on airport city developments, presented his concept of the "aerotropolis" to participants. They also heard from airport and county representatives.

Then the teams met for three days at the Marriott developing concepts for developing the area, which is seen as crucial because of new demands of e-commerce and just-in-time delivery.

"Location, location, location has been replaced by speed, speed, speed," Kelbaugh said Monday.

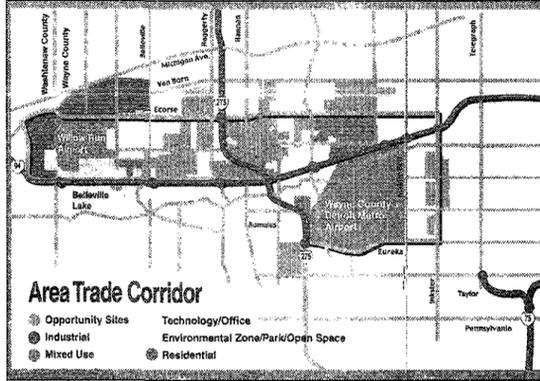
He said the "aerotropolis" will happen and the question is whether it will be carefully planned.

A PHYSICAL VISION

Robert Guenzel, Washtenaw County administrator, said the project was important to Washtenaw because of the potential for new jobs.

"We need a plan you can show to outside investors," he said.

Mulugetta Birru, director of the Wayne County Economic Development Authority, said that this could be the first



This map from a Wayne County brochure for Willow Run Airport shows the area that designers looked at for development as an aerotropolis.

"planned" airport city. "When it is done it will be one of the most unique developments in the United States," Birru said.

He said it will require a common set of zoning standards across community lines and adoption of a common master plan in the development area.

"It will have to be a plan that will withstand any political changes," he said.

The plans developed over the weekend will be gathered into a book. Kelbaugh said they will provide inspiration for future planning.

"The basic idea is to turn an economic vision into a physical vision," Kelbaugh said.

The groups each presented Powerpoint demonstrations on their plans.

The brainstorming groups called themselves the

Supersonics, the Stratocruisers and 777S. Each group included some kind of mass transit, water management systems, green space and pedestrian friendly areas.

The Supersonic group opted for an express bus route linking the airport with Detroit on the east and Ann Arbor on the west, because they argued that a light rail or subway system would be impractical because the area is too densely developed. They also envision using the existing heavy rail line. The Stratocruisers suggested working off the existing rail line and eventually building a light rail system that connects with existing trains. They suggest beginning with a bus system.

The 777S group envisions a light rail system running down Ecorse Road, which they have redubbed the Concourse as the centerpiece of their plan. They suggest turning Ecorse Road

into a multi-lane boulevard for light rail and automobiles with a lot of green space. But they also recommend preserving buildings and businesses already in existence. They also suggest development plans for a Metro Center close to Metro airport, a Gateway Center near Willow Run and a Belleville development north of the river and existing town commercial district.

The Supersonics suggest development along Merriman, development of green space and "green" buildings, high-density housing near the airport, hiking and biking trails and the use of roundabouts to handle traffic.

The Stratocruisers envision a Metro City along Middlebelt, lots of greenspace that respects local ecology and special development plans for Wayne, Romulus and Belleville.

hgallagher@oe.hometownlife.com

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Ann Arbor - A new free report has recently been released that reveals how breakthrough medical technology is offering new hope for sciatica sufferers. Discover how research has proven non-surgical decompression 86% successful in treating debilitating back pain. Find out how NASA's accidental discovery led to the most promising treatment today. For your free report entitled, "How Space Age Technology Is Solving Back Pain Without Drugs Or Surgery!" Call 1-800-293-2595 for the toll-free recorded message. Supplies are limited - call now. If phone lines are busy, visit: www.free-disc-report-4u.com

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OUR VIEWS

Thankless job still needs doing

It's not a position for the faint of heart, the indecisive or someone who doesn't want to spend the time learning about the issues. A thick skin is a necessity.

Once elected, you can expect to deal with an administration and staff that generally knows more than you about the issues and a public that generally knows less. Your role is to help bridge that gap, making decisions after listening to that community and based on your view of the best interest of the entire community.

You also need to find a way to work with others in the educational community — fellow board members, school district officials, staff, the unions, parents, students, etc.

And you need to be available for many, many meetings and to study problems on what seem like constant changes in state funding and other moves made by lawmakers.

In the Wayne-Westland Community Schools, one position will be open for voters to fill in May currently filled by board President Frederick Weaver. But if last year's election is any indication, Weaver will most likely face no opposition. Interest in serving on the board is spotty at best. With two of the past three elections posting no challengers for the incumbents.

This lack of interest has always puzzled us, because of the vital job school boards perform. Aside from parents, these are the people perhaps most responsible — outside the classroom, at least — for the development of our children.

Our children are inside school walls for more than a quarter of their waking hours between September through June, and school board members are responsible for what happens those seven hours a day.

Much of the effort of school board members goes unrewarded; indeed, they may take more grief than nearly any other elected officials. The pressure of molding our children's futures is enormous.

It's a task that needs dedicated community members, bold thinkers interested in shaping our future through educating our children. It's a daunting challenge.

And you've got until 4 p.m. Feb. 7 to step up and accept it.

Cooperative spirit the key to DWSD's future

Earlier this month, U.S. District Court Judge John Feikens sent a clear message to suburban leaders who have tried to wrest away control of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) from the city of Detroit. It's not going to happen, he ruled. Neither through legislation, nor litigation.

Feikens referenced state law when he ruled that only Detroit can own and operate the DWSD, which serves 4.5 million people and is the third largest water department in the country.

In September, Oakland County Drain Commissioner John McCulloch filed a motion in federal court to have Kwame Kilpatrick stripped of his duties as special administrator over the DWSD, and replaced by a five-member joint management committee composed of the drain commissioners from Oakland, Macomb and Genesee counties, as well as the director of the Wayne County Department of Environment and the mayor of Detroit.

While Feikens did remove Kilpatrick in his ruling, he shot down any formal suburban role in the governance of the DWSD, something McCulloch has been advocating for several years, because of perceived "repeated, continuing and systematic mismanagement" of the department.

To add insult to injury, Feikens praised the job Kilpatrick has done as the DWSD's special administrator, which gave him the power to override the current water board and the Detroit City Council's authority to hire and fire personnel, as well as on other decisions. The mayor of Detroit has served in the position since the late 1970s, when Feikens began overseeing a lawsuit filed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that charged the DWSD with polluting the Detroit River.

However, Feikens did say much needs to be done to bridge the differences between Detroit and its suburban water customers, and he renewed his call for cooperation to solve them.

In recent months there have been calls from both suburban leaders and Kilpatrick that the region needs to mend fences and quell the hostility that has existed between the city and its suburbs. The water issue offers an excellent opportunity to put some of that new cooperative spirit into practice. Lawmakers on both sides should lay down the swords and make sure the DWSD continues to provide some of the best water service in the country.



LETTERS

Throw out the Republicans

Mr. Bush is again crossing America on another propaganda campaign. Again he is hiding from any criticism that may point out his short comings or facts regarding his administration.

The Republican propaganda machine of Fox and talk radio is geared to spread the campaign. Only those professing faith to his religion may attend. Any true American with a clear head who could potentially ask a real question is banned from questioning Mr. Bush.

During his second speech, which he had announced prior to that he intended to clarify the administration's plans with Iraq, Mr. Bush said, "The facts are the Iraqi soldiers are growing independent, becoming more capable and are in the fight for freedom today and tomorrow." This could not have been more perfectly stated by a Fox network hack more perfectly. This is simply, "the facts are, no facts, just opinions."

In his fourth speech he had accepted responsibility for deciding to attack Iraq. He said the evidence that Saddam Hussein was a danger to United States was overwhelming. He did not accept responsibility for misleading America.

His sixth speech he admitted to spying on Americans, and saying that the constitution permitted this behavior, even though it is explicitly against the 1978 law. He also said legislators had heard of his plans before hand. The truth is many of those informed spoke out vehemently against the eaves dropping. When all is said and done, it will probably be revealed that those who were spied upon were not only those allegedly associated with terrorists, but also those who spoke out against Mr. Bush.

The facts are, as usual, Mr. Bush lied to the American people about evidence leading up to the war. This country has the best, without a doubt, intelligence organization in the world. They had known there was no evidence that Saddam Hussein was any danger and it also was a lie that other members of this government had the same intelligence report Mr. Bush.

True Americans are skeptical of any government. It is amazing there are supporters of Mr. Bush not profiting from the military action. Even the most ardent Bush supporter should be asking:

"Why is a Christian advocating torture? Why does a Christian lie about his intent when nominating a judge? Why does an American violate the fundamental American judicial tenet of innocent until proven guilty? Why is a democracy, where transparency in government is everything, continue to hide and cower from outside investigation and criticism? The hypocrisies are innumerable.

The silence from the Republican party is deafening. There is not an outcry against the corrupt actions of Mr. Bush and his cronies, rather acceptance and agreement with his actions. The entire Republican party is responsible for the sad state of America and the lack of integrity within government and the corruption within.

As an American I say it is time to throw out this Republican administration and as a true Christian I pray for the souls of the evil men and remember the words of Christ: "The devil is the father of lies" and he speaks through Mr. Bush.

Allan Biber
Westland

Tax reform and truth

We have grown up. We have learned the truth about Santa Claus, the tooth fairy and business taxes. The American public has learned the difference between truth and fantasy. Many of our politicians, however, think we still believe in fairy tales.

Recently, Gov. Granholm said that she wanted tax reform but that she didn't want to shift business taxes to individuals. I hope the governor understands that business taxes are just another cost of doing business and end up being included in the cost of products, just like all other business expenses. In essence, all business taxes are passed on to consumers in higher prices.

The truth is, we "individuals" pay the business taxes when we buy the goods and services produced by the businesses. To make matters worse, our Michigan produced goods and services often can't compete against foreign products with our tax inflated prices and this is costing us our jobs.

Is it any wonder that Michigan "leads" the nation in unemployment when we also have some of the highest business taxes.

Since we already are paying the business taxes, what would be the impact of a shift of taxes from business to individuals?

- 1) We would be able to see what we are really paying in taxes rather than having taxes hidden in prices of products.
- 2) We would be better able to control tax increases because every sales receipt would show us what we are really paying in taxes.
- 3) Companies and good jobs would return to Michigan and we would be the envy of the nation.

We Michigan residents should demand that our legislators and governor treat us like adults and to stop hiding taxes under our pillows. We now know that some "business fairy" will not come in the night and pay our taxes.

To learn more about tax reform, go to www.fairtaxmi.org. Then call or visit your state and national legislators and tell them to stop the dishonest practice of hiding taxes in our prices. Our jobs and way of life depend on them being as grown up as are you and I.

Roger Buchholtz
director and spokesman
MI FairTax

SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask that your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content.

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QUOTABLE

"This is important for Westland because it would be the city's first listing on the national register and our first historic district."

— Local historian Ruth Dale, about a possible historical designation for Annapolis Park subdivision, one of the nation's first suburban communities settled by black homeowners

WESTLAND
Observer

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Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our customers.

Survival of Ford Motor Co. is crucial for our well-being

Last Tuesday, they held a tribute dinner for Steve Hamp, who ended his enormously successful run of nine years as president of The Henry Ford and became a vice president at the Ford Motor Co. and chief of staff for Bill Ford, Ford's chairman and CEO.

The gathering, appropriately enough, was in the main Henry Ford Museum. Three hundred of the good and the great of southeastern Michigan strolled for their supper and then listened as heartfelt praises gushed over Hamp, whose eyes even grew moist as the evening went on.

Bill Ford was funny and charismatic. Steve's father- and mother-in-law, William and Martha Ford, were gracious and proud.

The Ford family is the closest thing we have to nobility in these parts. Their combined civic concern, generosity, dignity and ... well, class have been of incalculable benefit to the entire state for decades. Think of Michigan without the Ford Motor Co.

Now try to imagine it without The Henry Ford (which includes Greenfield Village) or the Detroit Symphony, the Detroit Institute of Arts — or countless other institutions of stature and merit. None would exist, at least not as they do now, without the Ford family.

Now fast forward to Monday. Bill Ford announced that his company's "Way Forward" involved closing 14 assembly and parts plants, including the Wixom plant that employs 1,500, and eliminating around 30,000 jobs throughout North America over the next five years.

The Ford Motor Co. will be shrinking itself overall by nearly a quarter, reducing production capacity by around a million units.

To say the situation is critical is an understatement. "It's the most serious crisis at Ford in modern times," says David Cole, the chairman of the Ann Arbor-based Center for Automotive Research.

Although Ford overall showed a profit for the first nine months of 2005, its operations on this continent lost more than \$1.4 billion before taxes. Combined total market share for Ford, Mercury and Lincoln fell from 18.3 percent to 17.4 percent.

To appreciate how sobering that number is, consider that a decade ago, Ford's share was more than 25 percent. The company's market capitalization has fallen by a flabbergasting \$40 billion since 2001. Currently, its factories are running at a puny rate of just 79 percent capacity, far below the 90 percent-plus mark needed for profitable operations these days.

The question is whether it can survive, given the weight of its chains. This enormous company resembles Gulliver tied down by the Lilliputians, thanks to the web of contract agreements Ford signed with the United Auto Workers.

According to those agreements, even if Ford closed every one of its U.S. factories, it would still have to

pay wages to the 87,000 UAW members who now work in them. Additionally, Ford would be liable for their health care and pension expenses — and for twice that number of retirees and dependents.

For years now, experts like Cole have argued that the business model of the American automobile industry is broken: Too much capacity, too little flexibility to cut costs, too much competition from foreign manufacturers.

Recent shocks have aggravated a desperate situation. Globalized workers in China and India are able to turn out parts and cars at a fraction of the cost in America.

Meanwhile, in recent years the price of steel, aluminum, plastics, gas — everything! — has skyrocketed.

We've lost something like 100,000 auto-related manufacturing and parts jobs in this state since 1999, and many more since the 1970s. They aren't coming back, and this week's plant closings are clear evidence the decline is far from over.

One can only admire the guts that it took Ford to call its restructuring plan "The Way Forward." And one can only wish — with every atom in one's being — that the plan turns out to be successful.

What all this means for us in Michigan is reasonably clear.

If our kids ever thought they could support a family with nothing more than a high school diploma, this week's news should come as a bucket of cold water in their faces.

If those who have retired or are about to ever thought their golden years were going to be securely taken care of by pensions and fully paid health care plans, they'd better think again.

And anyone in Michigan who was still assuming all we had to do was just wait for auto sales to improve next year or the year after that needs a speedy attitude adjustment, if not shock therapy.

But there's an upside, too. A smaller domestic auto industry may well turn out to be a healthier one. Loss of brawn-heavy jobs in Michigan may clear the decks for a far more healthy emphasis on high-skilled, brainy workers.

And there may be an added benefit from the shock of seeing a treasured icon, the company whose name was once synonymous with Detroit, reeling from the crush of a kind of competition the original Henry Ford never imagined.

Perhaps this will bring us — politicians, citizens, auto executives — to the realization that it's silly for us to sit around and just wait for the climate to change. That's what the dinosaurs did.

Nor can we bank on government or industry or the automakers themselves figuring out what to do. They must try, but we all have a role to play. To paraphrase Shakespeare, the solutions cannot come just from our stars anymore; they must come from ourselves.

Phil Power is a longtime observer of politics, economics and education issues in Michigan. He would be pleased to hear from readers at ppower@hcnnet.com.

Believing in miracles easier seeing transplant recipient

Maybe it was a good sign the password to get information about Andri Hill's progress from a Web site was "believeinmiracles."

Over the Christmas holiday, that's exactly what the plucky 9-year-old Plymouth girl got.

Andri, who experienced congestive heart failure at 9 months old and has battled heart problems ever since, started the New Year off the way her family had hoped — with a new heart. Andri came home from Children's Hospital Dec. 30, just 13 days after the surgery her parents are praying for saved her life.

Andri's homecoming, greeted by a couple of hundred people (some of whom had never even met her), ended — at least for now — some of the most anxious moments in the lives of her parents, Angela and Brian.

After much consulting with doctors, and prayer with God, the Hills last summer decided to add Andri to the waiting list for a new heart.

She had a bout with rising blood pressure that kept her name off the list until Aug. 29.

At that point, Angela Hill was given a beeper with which medical professionals would contact her if a heart became available. There wasn't much choice; Andri had been diagnosed with restrictive cardiomyopathy, a heart disease that, among other things, keeps the heart from relaxing between beats.

Doctors and nurses told Angela Hill when they gave her the beeper they'd try some other way to contact her in person, but the beeper still settled on Hill's belt like a weight. When I talked to the Hills this summer, I was struck by the anguish barely disguised behind the tears that welled in Angela's Hills eyes just talking about it.

"Emotionally, it's very hard," Hill said at the time. "It's harder for us as parents. You look at Andri, and she looks healthy, but the doctor is telling us she's sicker than she looks."

Not anymore. Andri made it home just 13 days after the transplant, a mask covering her mouth to ward off airborne elements, as surprised as her mother at the welcome she received when she drove up to the family's Arthur Street home.

Friends, relatives, strangers, even some news media, gathered to welcome her home, to wish her well. It was an outpouring of love that caught the family by surprise.

"I'm so overwhelmed by everybody, I can't believe it," Angela Hill said with tears in her eyes. "We're very lucky to have a great supportive school and community. I never imagined this."

Maybe it would have been tough to imagine, but it's probably not so surprising. Members of Andri's school community at Our Lady of Good Counsel ran bake sales, fundraisers and developed the "Believe in Miracles" bracelets to financially support the Hill family.

When Abigail Pray, who is the best friend to Andri's sister, Ally, heard about Andri's problem last summer, she didn't hesitate. According to her mom, Abigail marched to her room and emptied her piggy bank, then gave the money to the Hill family.

Abigail and another friend, 6-year-old Kaylee Carr-Taylor, put up a lemonade stand in front of Oasis Pottery on Ann Arbor Trail in downtown Plymouth, selling bracelets, refreshments and assorted baked goods in an effort to help their friend.

"Kaylee wanted to have a lemonade stand all summer, but never had the chance," said Diane Pray, Abigail's mother. "When they (Abigail and Kaylee) found out about Andri, they concocted this idea. They just have the hearts to help."

A lot of people do. That's always one of the best parts of stories like this, the people who come together to help someone who needs it. It's not a position the Hills are accustomed to, but one in which they found themselves anyway. Accepting the help was one of the first hurdles to jump.

"It's hard to be on the receiving end," Angela Hill admitted. "We've never been in this position before. It's overwhelming."

The story isn't over yet. The Hills have traded one kind of angst for another, turning their attention to helping their daughter recover from the surgery while fighting off the knowledge rejection is still possible.

But those worries are for the dark moments, late at night when such fears creep into the psyche. For now, Andri Hill is home with her new heart. She's already doing better, no longer winded simply by walking around the house.

After removing her mask long enough to thank all those well-wishers who greeted her with balloons, signs and — most importantly — love, Andri paraphrased Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*.

"There's a lot of really good people out there praying for me, and it makes me feel so happy," she said. "It's really good to be home. Thank you for all your prayers ... and continue to believe in miracles."

That's easier to do when you're looking at the product of one.

Brad Kadrich is community editor of the *Plymouth Observer*. He can be reached via e-mail at bkadrich@hometownlife.com or by phone at (734) 459-2700.



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Professors debate affirmative action

BY ALEX LUNDBERG
STAFF WRITER

In the run up to November's statewide ballot initiative to eliminate the use of preferences based on ethnicity or sex, Oakland University will play host to a debate over whether or not affirmative action is a good thing for the state and nation.

"Affirmative Action: Pro and Con," a traveling debate created by the anti-affirmative action group Toward a Fair Michigan, will run from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 1, at the Fireside Lounge, Oakland Center at Oakland University.

The debate is free and open to the public. William Allen, a political science professor at Michigan State University, is affiliated with TAFM and will speak against the practice of affirmative action.

"Affirmative action distorts the reality of citizenship in this country," he said. "It encourages decisions based on race."

One of the main problems, he said, was that affirmative action creates a climate where people are locked into perpetual roles of subordinate and superior,



Sedler

where the former is always dependent on the good graces of the other. "It undermines what we take to be the heart of America," Allen said. "The virtue of our principles."



Allen

Unlike some other anti-affirmative action activists, Allen doesn't believe the program ever had a useful place in American society and has been a bad idea since being introduced by President Lyndon Johnson in the mid-60s.

The only true path to sorting through racial inequality, he said, is rigorous enforcement of the law.

Robert Sedler, a constitutional law professor at Wayne State University who will represent the other side of the debate at Oakland University, said history carries inordinate weight in race and gender issues.

"There's a long and tragic history of race and gender discrimination in this country," he said. "(Affirmative action) is the only way to counter white- and male-supremacy in the U.S."

A self-described strong supporter of affirmative action, he said keeping the program is in the public interest just as the active participation of women and minorities in all walks of life.

"Race and gender should continue to be taken into account along with other factors," Sedler said. "If you don't, there's going to be more whites and fewer blacks (in several spheres). We have to bring about equal representation in all walks of life."

TAFM Program Coordinator Carol Allen said the organization has promoted discussions about affirmative action in forums around the state. The style of the conferences is as much a focus as the messages.

"In a lot of cases, rhetoric is the main approach," she said. "We emphasize cooler discussions. We want people to speak on a principled basis and appeal to people's minds, not their emotions."

Allen said feedback from events in Lansing, East Lansing and Traverse City vindicates the approach of civility. TAFM is planning to hold more debates around the state.

Ford: Plant closings 'painful last resort'

BY ALEX LUNDBERG
STAFF WRITER

Days after rolling out an elaborate display at the North American International Auto Show, the leadership of the Ford Motor Co. has announced sagging North American sales is forcing the company to close factories and cut thousands of American manufacturing jobs, including more than 1,500 in Wixom.

Monday morning, Ford Chairman and Chief Executive Bill Ford called the restructuring plan, The Way Forward, a bold and sweeping strategy that calls for sacrifices at all levels to create sustainable, profitable change.

"These cuts are a painful, last resort," he said. "It will affect many lives, families and communities."

By 2008, the plan will close

plants in Wixom, Atlanta, St. Louis, Batavia and Windsor. Other plants will have their operations scaled back.

While the company has shown good growth in Europe, South America and Asia, sales in North America haven't followed the trend. He chalked the failure up to old thinking — that the American customer will purchase whatever the company wants to build.

"My great-grandfather said if he built what his customers wanted, he'd build a faster horse," Ford said. "Now, we will build what our customers want."

Wixom City Manager J. Michael Dorman said Monday was a day for the workers at the plant, their families and friend. Tomorrow, he said, and every day after are for the city to work to bring things back together.

"We have a half-century rela-

tionship with the plant, a good relationship," Dorman said. "We're going to identify the timetable of their plan and work to understand what they're trying to accomplish."

Now that the plans are known, he said the city can start to try to minimize the effect of the plant's closing on other local businesses. In a way, Ford's announcement is almost good news.

"The plant's employees are off that roller coaster, it's a good thing to know rather than to guess and to speculate," Dorman said. "We're at our best when we know the facts. That's when many of us here are at our best."

U.S. Rep. Thaddeus McCotter, R-Livonia, whose 11th District includes Wixom, released a statement, "It is a body blow to the 1,567 hard-working men and women of the Wixom Assembly Plant. Our prayers and thoughts

must be with the workers and their loved ones. They fought for their jobs and their plant every step of the way. Yet now that their paths are uncertain, I will do everything possible to assist them through this difficult transition to a better future."

McCotter's office said he joined Wixom workers in January 2005 outside Ford World Headquarters to urge the company to keep the plant open.

Though Wayne County facilities were spared for the moment, County Executive Robert Ficano called the Wixom closing a "disturbing and unfortunate setback."

"Sadly, the outcome will be felt by the city, many of our citizens and businesses in the area," Ficano said in a statement. "The plant closing is yet another clear indicator that we must diversify our industries and economy

while supporting the ever changing manufacturing base on which we have become so reliant."

Oakland County Executive Brooks Patterson said the change was an unfortunate blow to the families of workers at the Wixom plant, one that would cause disruptions in everything from mortgage payments to the college plans of their children.

He said the county will do what it can to help.

He said his offices, together with representatives from the United Auto Workers lobbied the governor's office and the Michigan Department of Transportation to renovate the I-96/Wixom Road exchange on behalf of the Ford plant. But, he said, the announcement at Ford is larger than what Oakland County or Michigan can do for the company.

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