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MONDAY

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## Residents to see downtown plan

By JAN JEFFRES  
Staff Writer

Picture a downtown Novi with trendy shops and townhouses smack up against a wide sidewalk alive with people, a movie theater with a marquee as grandly old-fashioned as the Farmington Civic's, a farmer's market and stylish outdoor cafes where folks sit chatting under umbrellas. A dash of urban sophistication with a

touch of small-town coziness — a far cry from a city tendriling outwards from a mall.

Insiders say that the puzzle pieces of this local government-guided Main Street are now falling into place. Not least because the American Federal Bank of Dallas, Texas, managers of the targeted site — 55 vacant acres south of Grand River Avenue and east of Novi Road — agreed this summer to work with the city as it

stretches toward this goal.

But Novi will have some major commitments to make if the project is really going to happen.

Residents will get a peek at the developing picture Monday night, when Community Development Director Jim Wahl makes a presentation to the city council on the progress being made by Novi's Town Center Steering Committee.

What the developers, including the

Singh Development Company, want above all from Novi are water mains, sewer lines and the crucial ring road to join the southeast with the other three town center quadrants.

"One of the big things that appears to be the real impetus is the construction of a ring road in the southeast quadrant. The committee is going to have suggestions on how we might fund it and build it at the city's expense," Quinn said.

Included in the possibilities are a local pitch for state and federal grants or Novi could provide the money up front, with the downtown developers agreeing to pay it back.

American Federal is willing to donate the right-of-way for the ring road, Quinn added, and is also discussing a land swap with Novi.

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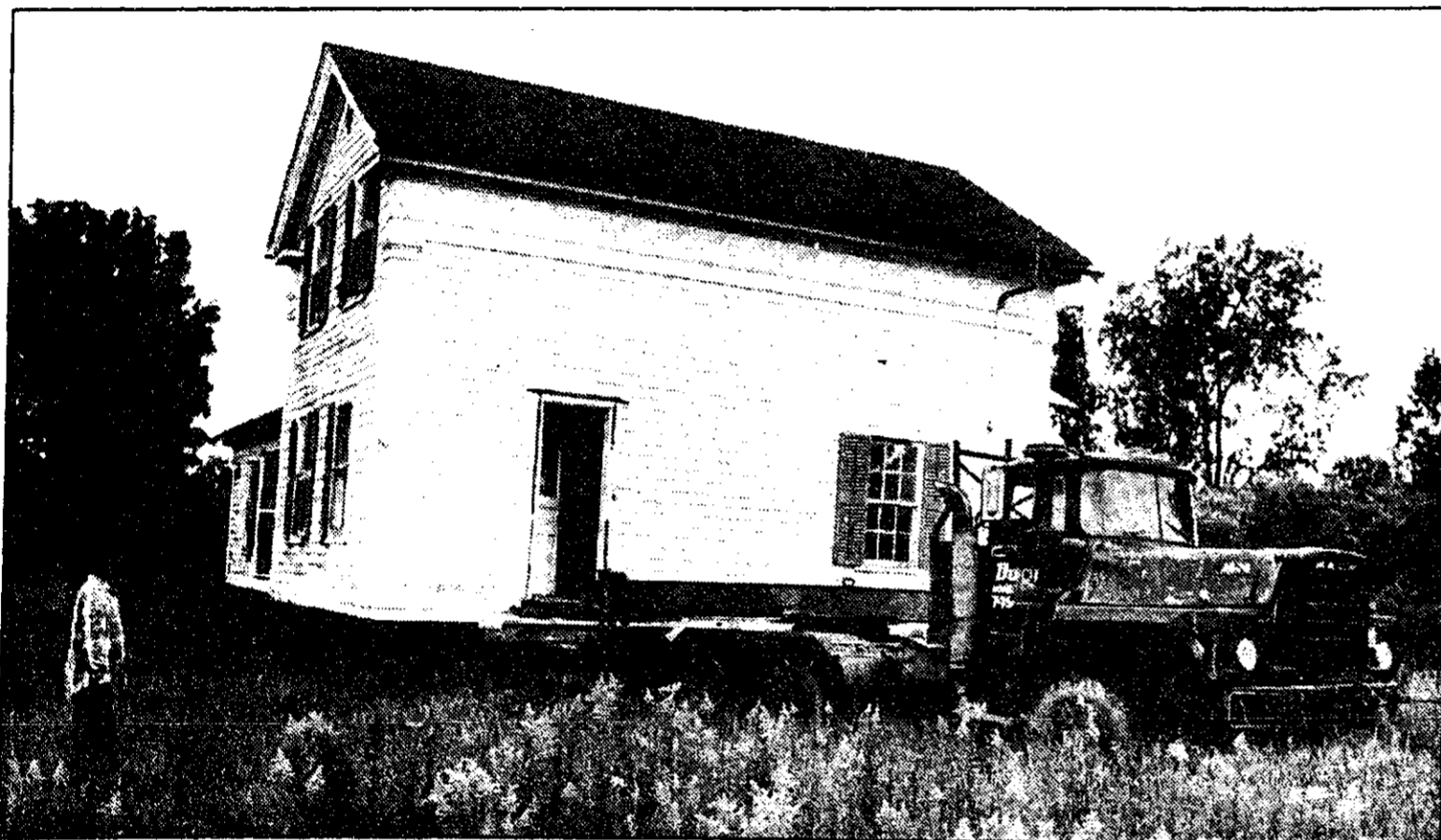


Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

### On the road again

The moving of the Sally Thornton House, scheduled for Thursday, was postponed due to storms the night before, owner Bill Garfield said. If the mud dries and the going is good, the house will be relocated from Nine Mile Road to an Eleven Mile spot on Tuesday.

## Tree trimming causes new controversy

By JAN JEFFRES  
Staff Writer

Orchard Lake Estates homeowners Laurie and Bob Quay were recently crawling around in their backyard, counting tree rings.

The rings — 25 deep and more — were on the stumps left behind when Detroit Edison cut down over 20 mature trees toward the rear of their Winthrop Drive lot. Three of the trees were over a fence into the Quays' yard and one was in a neighbor's. All four are part of a city-protected woodland.

The couple say they were not notified in advance of the Sept. 3 chopping.

"It looks like a total war zone on my property," Bob Quay said.

"Apparently, they are not allowed to cut any trees in your yard. Apparently, they are doing more than just cutting. This guy was in my backyard more than 30 to 40 feet. My wife had to chase him out. They are on a quota to cut trees."

Bob Quay  
Novi Homeowner

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restitution."

The trees in Orchard Ridge are part of woods which spills over into Cottisford Drive in Novi Township. The township portion, in Brookland Farms, is not protected by the city's woodland ordinance.

The Cottisford property owners gave approval for the 20 or so trees which were removed from the road easement there, Kessler said.

Detroit Edison and its contractors have been sweeping through the city as part of tree-trimming campaign the utility agreed to undertake after Michigan Public Service Commission investigated the massive power outages in the July 1991 storm.

Clearing the lines will improve service and customer safety, Kessler said.

Restitution or not, the Quays are not happy with the results. Before the woods were so dense, they couldn't see the Novi Township home behind theirs. Now they can.

Bob Quay said he wanted to alert other Novi residents to the tree-trimming.

"These guys are just out there with their chain saws having a ball," he said.

"The audacity! They climbed over the fence and cut trees down. Then this guy was walking around our backyard knocking on trees."

## Technology center nears finish

By RANDY COBLE  
Staff Writer

Officials of the Novi Community School District are striving to whip their new high-tech Instructional Technology Center into shape, and the process will shortly be completed, they said.

The technical center incorporates cutting-edge technology into the classroom. District officials are enthusiastic about the benefits the center will bring to the students. Phase I of the two-phase implementation project will cost an estimated \$593,000 and will be fully completed by the end of December.

Chock-full of dozens of computers, printers, hard drives, scanners and an abundance of related equipment, the center will accommodate the needs of teachers and students, and not just for computer curriculum. The technology can be used in such courses as social studies, Koster said.

A curriculum lab, computer course labs, a multi-media center and video studio are the major features of the technical center. The video studio will include camcorders, microphones and other recording equipment, as well as editing equipment.

The center, which connects Novi Middle School and Novi Meadows Elementary, located on Taft Road, is partially up and running now,

"The Macs (Macintosh computers) are in, the chairs are in, but not the tables to put them on. But it's coming in, a day at a time off the trucks. Every day they do a bit more."

Milan Obrenovich  
Novi Middle School Principal

that houses the computers. We're scheduled to get a good chunk of it by Sept. 28."

Novi Middle School Principal Milan Obrenovich agreed, and said that "the Macs (Macintosh computers) are in, the chairs are in, but not the tables to put them on. But it's coming in, a day at a time off the trucks. Every day they do a bit more."

Also on tap is the job of infrastructure wiring to connect the systems to each other, Koster said. The district has received seven bids for the work, and will evaluate them next week. "The firms involved said it would take them from two to six weeks, maximum," Koster said.

Grades five and six from Novi Meadows and grades seven and eight from Novi Middle School are using the center's facilities in their classroom right now, Koster said. "It's not a typical school, like we think of it," he added, referring to those who attended public school in the largely pre-computer era. "It's hard to envision it, what it can do for the kids."

Calling the technical center "a major change in the way information is delivered," Koster described the center's effect as "making learning's implementation easier."

"Students are no longer relegated to just the books and the lectures," Koster continued. "There are all kinds of ways to learn now."

and work continues to bring the remaining section up to speed, assistant superintendent of business/operations James Koster said.

"There are students learning in it right now," Koster said. "There are 13 classrooms going in either wing of the center. It's the center section that's being worked on." The two wings connect the two schools to the technical center and the main computer lab that is still under construction.

"We're configuring the site now," Koster said. "What we're mainly waiting on is the furniture

## Towing firm embroiled in lawsuit

By RANDY COBLE  
Staff Writer

A Walled Lake towing company which lost its contract with the City of Novi earlier this year amid controversy is the subject of a lawsuit filed in the Oakland County Circuit Court Aug. 28.

The former owners of Interlakes Towing, Robert and Deborah Beech, filed the suit against current owner Michael Liess, owner of Allstate Towing of Union Lake. James Austin, attorney for the plaintiffs said that they "wanted to sell the company to Mr. Liess. On May 1, they turned over the operation of the company to him, and planned to sell it on July 1. The deal didn't go through, and the owners did not receive the company back as given," Austin said.

Liess said he could not comment extensively due to the upcoming hearing on the suit, but said that "there are a lot of things in that lawsuit that are not factual."

Interlakes, which had provided towing services to Novi, lost its contract this spring amid allegations of impropriety. There were claims made that the company was using a "double-billing" system on towing calls it made for the city, charging car owners rates for services well over what it had agreed to in a contract with the City of Novi. Currently, three towing firms provide the wrecker service.

"We had an agreement, and he misled me," Liess said, referring to Austin. "There were things that it required that couldn't be done. The contract had to be signed by July 1 and he wasn't in town. The agreement was void."

Liess said that he planned to counter-sue those involved, but declined to say on what ground. "There's going to be legal action taken," he said.

The suit includes seven counts, and alleges that Liess illegally kept Interlakes equipment despite the fact that the sale did not go through. The list of equipment includes three wreckers,

eight radios, telephone lines, office equipment and a towing contract with AAA of Michigan. Liess, the suit continues, refused to remit monies paid by the company or return the equipment.

"We want either the assets back or to have the contract price go through," Austin said, and said the suit sought \$50,000. The Beeches claim in the suit that they suffered "emotional distress" due to the situation.

Liess said the lawsuit's claims were not true, and expressed concern that the situation would damage his business. "I have a very good reputation in the towing industry here," he said.

Austin said that he will ask Circuit Court Judge Deborah Tyner to issue an injunction and demand that Liess give the property back or put it in the court's care until the matter is decided. A hearing is scheduled before Tyner on Wednesday.

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