

Hills' community policing honored

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Ann Arbor is not the only place to boast of a nationally No. 1 ranked institution this week. Farmington Hills Police Department is tops in the country for community policing.

National League of Cities bestowed the honor on the department for its 39 programs involving police and residents alike. Farmington Hills police,

which received a similar accolade from the Michigan Municipal League, was a finalist with Lakeland, Fla. for cities with populations between 25,001-75,000 for the honor.

NLC evaluators visited the program Oct. 30.

"Farmington Hills is doing some incredible work in the area of community policing," said Keith Kirk, National League of Cities spokesman. "They (evalu-

ators) were very impressed. "They thought it was very comprehensive. Not only did they have programs for children and youth, they had programs for seniors and programs for people who are handicapped."

Chief Bill Dwyer informed Hills city council members prior to Monday night's regular meeting. Dwyer will officially receive the Excellence in Community Policing award at the NLC Congress of Cities Convention in Philadelphia Dec. 6.

Farmington Hills police started community-related programs - involving small school children to senior adults - in 1994.

"I think it's all come together and we're extremely proud," Dwyer said.

Such programs have helped the department meet the increased policing demands of a growing city during the past 20 years, Dwyer said.

He credits community policing for the 14-percent decrease in crime so far this year, which includes a 25-percent drop in burglaries.

A contingent of police and elected officials were impressed with the comprehensive nature of all 39 programs during their visit, said the NLC spokesman.

Applicants for the award had to meet nine criteria covering context, intervention and impact



Citizen patrol: Volunteers Dick and Peggy Lukey are among the seniors who do hand-icap enforcement in Farmington Hills' Community Policing program.

of the programs. NLC received several hundred applications.

At Monday's council meeting, Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi read three letters from people complimenting Hills officers on three separate incidents.

The notes thanked officers for their help when cars stalled and during other emergencies.

"We got letters like that every week and it shows why our police department won that national award," Vagnozzi said.

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Development from page A1

hour. "I'm here to tell you I think it merits careful study," said Andy Nicklshoff, president of West-gate Homeowners Association.

Traffic is not an issue, Schafar said, since most residents in the proposed development are expected to be empty-nesters and professionals who typically make fewer car trips.

The math doesn't add up, countered Fran Valley, president of the Highmeadow Homeowners Association. She said the initial 40-unit proposal was expected to provide an estimated six car trips a day for a total of 240. With 80 units - even if the number of trips is cut in half - there would still be 240 trips.

Valley also shared Council-

woman Vicki Barnett's concern about the impact such a development would have on the 13 Mile corridor.

"You're opening up a multiple alley," Valley said. "Unsuccessful city council challenger Massimo Kurzeja also spoke on behalf of Highmeadow residents. No plans exist to widen 13 Mile, Kurzeja said. "It's

too much," she added. A Greening Street resident spoke for herself.

"In my opinion, there's some major brown-noising going on," Janice Katz said. "I hope you see through it and work in the best interests of the Highmeadow homeowners and the rest of the residents on 13 Mile Road."

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