

Serious crime decreases in the Hills

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills Police Department saw an overall decrease in serious crimes and stepped up community policing efforts in 1998, according to its annual report, which will be presented publicly Monday.

Farmington Hills Police responded to a total of 35,266 calls in 1998, marking a 4.5 percent increase. There were seven fatal accidents and one homicide. The most serious crimes decreased 3.1 percent overall from 1,111 to 1,078. Criminal sexual conduct decreased 7.3 percent from 41 to 38; robberies decreased 9 percent from 33 to 30; and assaults decreased

2.8 percent from 1,037 to 1,007.

But less serious crimes increased 6.7 percent overall, with opening under the influence offenses increasing 3.6 percent. The increase is because of more aggressive policing and more officers discovering offenses while on patrol, according to Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer. Other offenses decreased 4



Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer

percent from 28,780 to 28,664. These offenses include juvenile complaints, traffic offenses, warrants, traffic crashes, sick and injured, animal complaints, alarms and miscellaneous. Dwyer said the reduced crime rate can be attributed to multiple factors.

"There can be a correlation between unemployment and crime," Dwyer said. Low unemployment rates can lead to a reduction in property crimes such as larcenies and burglaries.

Strong community policing programs such as neighborhood watch, 911 training for children and anti-graffiti have also helped stem crime, Dwyer said. Community policing will get a big boost this year with a brand

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According to Bill Dwyer
—Farmington Hills police chief

new recreational vehicle renovated for police use. The mobile community policing vehicle will be unveiled this week and will be used beginning in May. The 33-foot vehicle is designed to bring

police to the residents, Dwyer said.

"I think it's going to enhance our police efforts as far as taking the vehicle into the community," he said. "We're taking the police department to the people."

Inside the motor home, police can take reports, hold meetings with residents and store crime prevention materials, such as brochures and other information.

The unit can also serve as a command post in case of disasters or other problems, Dwyer said.

The report and an accompanying video will be presented at the Farmington Hills City Council meeting at 7:30 p.m. Monday at city hall at Orchard Lake and 11 Mile.

How often:

According to the Farmington Hills Police Department, last year in the city, there was:

- One murder every 2,780 hours
- One robbery every 2,780 hours
- One violent crime every 45 hours
- One aggravated assault every 70 hours
- One homicide every 32 hours
- One burglary every 21 hours
- One larceny-theft every four hours
- One motor vehicle theft every 50 hours

Police need help in finding driver

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
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Fragments of yellow plastic are all the evidence Farmington Hills police have in attempting to solve the Saturday, April 3, hit-and-run fatality near Nine Mile-Tuck.

In that 8 p.m. incident, pedestrian Kathleen McKeon, 44, was killed while crossing Nine Mile on her way back home after making a purchase at The Wine Tasters party store.

Police Cmdr. Dennis Rochford Thursday implored anybody with information about the case

to call the traffic section at (248) 473-9683 or (248) 473-9694 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

"It would help if we had some eyewitnesses," Rochford said. "Somebody has to know who owns that vehicle and who was driving it. We're looking for help from the public."

Previously, it had been reported that the vehicle was a late model white Ford pickup truck. But Rochford said evidence collected at the scene matches that of a 1997-1991 model.

The recovered yellow plastic fragments are from the truck's front turn signal, although police

HIT-AND-RUN FATAL ACCIDENT

cannot yet determine which side it was on.

The driver of the truck, headed westbound on Nine Mile just east of Tuck, did not see McKeon in time as she crossed south. Accompanied by her small dog, the woman was returning to her residence in the Nantucket Townhomes, where she lived alone.

Rochford said the driver of the pickup swerved at the last instant to avoid McKeon, who was killed from the impact. McKeon was not crossing at the intersection.

Charges against the driver would have been unlikely had he

or she stopped after hitting McKeon because the driver had the right of way and was not speeding, Rochford added.

But that all changed when the driver took off. "Even now, looking at what we have," Rochford said, "the only thing you can charge ... is leaving the scene of an accident (a felony). From the evidence, based on all we have, (the driver) was not at fault."

McKeon was accompanied by her dog (she was holding the pet's leash) as she crossed Nine Mile, said Nick Shamm, owner of The Wine Tasters. He waited on the woman a few minutes earlier.

But miraculously, the dog survived the hit-and-run tragedy. The pet was found next to the store, in the parking lot of a bowling alley, and is now being cared for by one of McKeon's neighbors.

Arthritis Today
JOSEPH W. WEISS, M.D. RHEUMATOLOGY
18829 Farmington Road
Livonia, Michigan 48150
Phone: (248) 478-7860

JOINT INJURY
You do not need to be an athlete to suffer a sports injury. Just like someone on the football or soccer field, you can get a blow to a knee or elbow. Often, as happens to the athlete, distraction causes you to overlook the incident. When your knee or elbow swells and hurts several hours later, you don't remember the initial event.

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In contrast, an injured knee, shoulder, or elbow, will hurt and swell suddenly over a period of hours to a day.

Second, you will find that one or two aspirin or ibuprofen, heat to the swollen joint, or rest provided limited relief with arthritis. In contrast, an unexplained injury to a joint, the same therapies often decrease down pain sufficiently to permit you a night's sleep, or allow you to keep up your regular activities.

If, in time, the swelling and pain from the injury do not resolve, you need to see a doctor. By his questions, your doctor can usually determine that the bothersome joint resulted from injury not arthritis. In such cases, aspiration of any blood or fluid in the joint is the treatment of choice. Other than your lengthy regimen of anti-arthritis drugs.

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Arts commission honors students

The Farmington Area Arts Commission has announced the winners of the 14th Annual Contest for High School Artists of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Suzanne Silles, art instructor with Walled Lake Schools, judged the entries. In the category of two-dimensional art, first prize was awarded to Andrea Baker of Mercy High School. Second prize was given to Suzanne Valade of Mercy High School, and third prize was earned by Andrea Burch of Mercy High School.

In the category of three-dimensional art, the first prize was awarded to Brynn Maki of Farmington High School, second prize was given to Lauren Lanckes of North Farmington High School, and third prize went to Heather Friedl of Farmington High School.

Honorable mention awards were earned by Nina Bianchi of North Farmington High School, Akil Davkins of Farmington High School, Lindsay Daak of Farmington High School, Heather Fromm of Farmington High School, Lisa Ilseu Grentzel of

Awards will be presented at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 25, at the William Costick Activities Center, 28500 11 Mile, Farmington Hills.

Farmington High School, Christine Herrmann of Farmington Alternative Academy, Melissa Hollman of Mercy High School, Morya Link of Farmington High School, Heather Malinowski of Farmington High School and Maria Staring of Farmington High School.

Awards will be presented at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 25, at the William Costick Activities Center, 28500 11 Mile, Farmington Hills.

Winning art will be displayed at the Farmington Community Library, downtown branch, during April and at the Farmington Festival of the Arts April 25-May 2 at the William Costick Activities Center.

Gone fishing Sign up for annual trout derby

Kids, ages 14 years and younger are invited to register for the annual Trout Derby, sponsored by the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills. The derby will be 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Saturday, April 24, in Shiawassee Park in Farmington. The derby is limited to the first 600 kids that register in

SHIAWASSEE PARK

person at the Special Services Department behind Farmington Hills City Hall at 11 Mile and Orchard Lake.

There is no cost to register for the derby. But kids must provide their own fishing equipment and bait. The cities will provide the trout, but kids are limited to keeping only three fish.

The cut off date for registration for the derby is April 21. When kids sign up for the derby, they will be given a set of rules for the event.

For more information, contact Farmington Hills Special Services at 473-9570.

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