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Child killer tips increase

Task force gets new computer

By JOE MARTUCCI

A police task force searching for the killer of four Oakland County children will soon have all the computer capacity it needs.

That was the word Tuesday from State Budget Director Gerald Miller. The Oakland County Homicide Task Force was forced Thursday to erase 255 "low priority" tips because the computer memory bank used to store the clues was full.

The task force has received more than 13,000 tips since it was formed in March. Police were concerned that they might have to erase 4,000 of those tips because the memory bank of the borrowed computer was filled to capacity.

The computer problem was brought to a head when an estimated 500 new tips flooded the task force following the release early last week of a new composite sketch of the suspected killer.

Budget Director Miller said the state, using federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) grant funds, will acquire a new computer system that can be used by the task force.

Miller said the computer's memory bank would be located in Lansing and would be connected to terminals in task force headquarters in Beverly Hills by telephone lines.

"MY PURCHASING people are contacting a number of firms right now. We haven't decided whether to lease or buy the equipment. We'll make

whatever deal is best for the taxpayers," Miller said.

He added that the computer would be under the control of his department until the state police justify computer needs other than those connected with the task force investigation.

"I've said all along that the first priority was in Oakland County and that we need to get a system in there. My concern has been what the state police want to do other than Oakland County. They have not justified what their other needs are," Miller maintained.

The task force has borrowed an estimated \$200,000 worth of computer services from Hewlett-Packard of Farmington Hills. Miller said value of the new computer system would be \$450,000-\$500,000.

Sgt. Joseph Kreske of the state police, second in command of the task force, said the 255 tips erased last week have not been lost.

He said they were deleted from the computer's memory and are recorded on print-out sheets. Kreske explained that it takes more time for an investigator to scan the print-out sheets than to call up information on the computer.

Thus, if a large number of tips had to be erased the investigation could suffer because it takes longer to search the print outs and there is greater chance for error, Kreske noted.

MILLER SAID the task force would have unlimited access to the new computer and there would be more than enough memory capacity to handle potential new tips.

Meanwhile, Kreske said that the flood of new tips emanating from the new composite had slowed considerably this week.

"It's calmed down a little bit today. We put it (the new composite) out Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday were the big days. It gradually petered out, and now were back to about normal," he said.

In the weeks prior to release of the new drawing, the task force had been receiving 40-60 new tips per week. Kreske estimated that even with the slowdown, the task force would collect 100 new clues this week.

He said investigators had anticipated the influx of new clues, most of which involve persons who claim that the sketch resembles someone they know.

Kreske said a few of the new tips looked good at first, but failed to pan out after investigation. He said investigators remain optimistic, however, since the new composite in considered to be a much better look-alike.

"Everyone seems to feel this sketch looks more like a photograph. It's a lot more life-like. The other (earlier composite) was so general," Kreske said.

"We still haven't gotten the call from the person who says, 'I know who you want,' but some of these things take time to check out. So far, there's nothing we feel is going to pan out," Kreske said.

Police developed the new composite from recollections of a new witness, who corroborates past information that a man believed responsible for the murder of Timothy King was seen

on the day the Birmingham boy was kidnapped.

The new witness, identified only as a Birmingham area resident, saw the suspect twice—shortly before noon near Adams School and at 4 p.m. in the Chatham Supermarket parking lot near Hunter and Maple. Both are near King's neighborhood.

Both times, the man was seated in a blue Gremlin. Timothy was last seen at the Hunter-Maple Pharmacy at about 8:30 p.m.

Police believe the same man is responsible for three other kidnappings in the last 13 months. The victims were Mark Stebbins of Ferndale, Jill Robinson of Royal Oak and Kristine Mihelich of Berkeley.

Safe theft is foiled at Herc's Beef Buffet

A Livonia man is in Oakland County Jail awaiting a Jan. 4 examination in 47th District Court for breaking and entering into Herc's Beef Buffet, 28975 Grand River, Farmington Hills.

Douglas William Adrian, 23, was arraigned this week before Judge Margaret Schaeffer after his Christmas Eve arrest. He was unable to post \$20,000 bond and was sent to Oakland County Jail.

Adrian was charged with breaking and entering. He is suspected of damaging a safe, breaking and entering with intent to commit a larceny and with possession of burglary tools.

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Finance set for OCC

The business administration department of Oakland Community College will offer a course in personal finance. Taught at OCC's Orchard Ridge campus, the class will meet on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. during the winter semester, which begins Jan. 10.

Ten prominent speakers from the community will lecture on topics such as saving on income taxes, buying and selling a home, various types of investments, auto and homeowners insurance, life insurance, auto buying, social security and consumer legal rights.

Registration/takes place alphabetically Jan. 4-6. Tuition and fees for this three-credit hour class is \$48 for area residents.

For more information, call Professor Bronstein at 478-9400.

Wind player on Penn TV

A student musician from Farmington performed with the Susquehanna University Woodwind Quintet in a program aired on northeastern Pennsylvania public television.

Gabriella Szamborski, now a junior in Susquehanna's music department, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Szamborski of 3222 Lee Lane. She is a graduate of Farmington High School.

Farmington Observer

Published every Monday and Thursday by the Observer & Economic Newspapers, 35251 Schooncraft Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48150. Second-class postage paid at Livonia, Michigan 48151. Address all mail subscriptions: change of address, Form 3576 to P.O. Box 2926, Livonia, Michigan 48151. Telephone 261-3800.

HOME DELIVERY SERVICE: Newsstand price \$5.00. Carrier monthly \$10.00.



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