

Auto shop hearing delayed

By TOM LONERGAN

A pre-trial hearing has been postponed until June 9 to determine whether 185 auto repair shops, new car dealerships and individuals will face circuit court trials on price fixing charges.

District Judge James Mies of Livonia postponed the preliminary examinations, which had been scheduled for Tuesday.

The new date is 30 days after a deadline Mies set for defense attorneys to enter discovery and other technical motions in the case, touted by the Michigan Attorney General's office as the first criminal price fixing case in 50 years.

A WAYNE COUNTY citizens grand jury recently issued indictments against 62 auto repair shops and 123 owners and operators of those shops, primarily in the metropolitan area.

The indictment alleges 18 defendants, led by the Automobile Service Councils (ASC) of Michigan, a trade group based in Livonia, fixed auto body repair prices by agreeing to add a fixed percentage increase to the cost of each body repair job.

Mies met privately in his chambers with nearly 30 attorneys from both sides before determining a new date for the preliminary examination.

Earlier Tuesday, Wayne County Circuit Court Judge Patrick J. Duggan ordered that testimony and exhibits provided to the grand jury be made available to the defense attorneys.

There are believed to be 400 to 500 pages of testimony from 33 witnesses who appeared before the grand jury.

Grand jury sessions are conducted in secret.

All but three of the defendants indicted have been arraigned. Birmingham Chrysler-Plymouth Co., 2100 W. Maple, Troy, was among five defendants arraigned before Mies on Tuesday.

Mies set no bond and entered innocent pleas for the defendants.

MIES OBJECTED to the attorney general's office conducting a search for one defendant, Bob Borst Lincoln Motor Co., 1850 W. Maple Road, Troy, through the Michigan State Police Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) computer.

Mies scheduled the Borst's arraignment for 9 a.m. Tuesday before circuit Judge Duggan.

"I would be very upset if you put him in the LEIN network and arrested him," Mies told assistant attorney general Edwin Bladen.

Bladen said Borst's name was entered in the LEIN computer because he had not appeared for an arraignment before Tuesday.

"Isn't that ridiculous, your honor, for this offense?" said Borst's attorney, Conrad Kreger.

"I'm not sure where he is," Kreger said of his client. "He is in transit. He has substantial assets in Michigan. He is certainly not going to avoid arraignment on a misdemeanor charge."

THE PRICE fixing charge, brought under the state's anti-trust laws, carries a maximum penalty of two years in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine that can be applied for each day it is proven prices were rigged.

The businesses indicted include four new car dealerships and six collision shops in Troy, Birmingham, Farmington Hills and Rochester and a collision shop in Redford Township.

ASC, 2750 Plymouth Road, Livonia, represents 200 auto repair shops in the metropolitan area.

Bush rally for area is Tuesday

Monday, February 25, 1980

(F-4)X(B,T,S,R)5A

The Michigan George Bush for President Committee will hold a tri-county rally at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25 in Southfield.

Free and open to the public, it will be held at Divine Providence Parish hall, 25335 W. Nine Mile, between Beech and Telegraph roads.

State Bush chairperson Lorel Ruppe will report on the national

campaign, and state campaign director Colleen Engler will report on Michigan efforts.

Regional field representative Lev Wood said, "The intent of this evening is to gather together all district and county Bush supporters, to discuss organization goals and developments and to pick up Bush momentum toward the May 20 Republican presidential primary."

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Small bus fares to rise

Fares for the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority's (SEMTA) small buses will increase five cents for most riders next month.

The increase, which a SEMTA spokeswoman said is the first since the small bus systems were developed, will take effect March 1.

The base fare will be 55 cents. Added zone charges will make the total increase 10 cents for some riders.

The small bus system is divided into eight zones. A ride through three zones, for example, will increase 10 cents to \$1.70.

According to SEMTA, the majority of elderly and handicapped riders who use the small bus systems get a half-fare discount. For them the total in-

crease, with zone charges, will be five cents.

IN OAKLAND County, the small bus system is known as Oakland County Advance Reservation Transit (OCART).

Sheep dog club to train

The Old English Sheep Dog Club of Greater Detroit will hold a show ring training session at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday in the Dearborn Civic Center, 15801 Michigan Avenue.

There is a \$5 charge for non-club members. For registration and club information, contact Pam Phillips of Canton, 455-6169.

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