

Attorney general ponders suit in tainted-gas case

By Gary M. Cates
staff writer

The former owner of the Union 76 Station at Plymouth and Levan roads may be the subject of a class action suit initiated by the Michigan Attorney General's Office.

The attorney general sent a notice of intended action Tuesday to Leon Stone in regard to the sale of tainted gasoline.

Stone, who sold the station to Kelly

Oil, could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

The unleaded gasoline in question reportedly was sold at the station between March 4 and 14. Motorists who bought the bad gas suffered damage to their engines, with repair bills starting at \$500.

According to the Wayne County Air Pollution Control Unit, the gas contained an unacceptable level of gum, which when burned would damage fuel intake valves.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also is conducting testing of the fuel but hasn't released any results as of Tuesday.

"We likely will issue something in the next week or so," said Richard Akerman, of the EPA's Washington D.C. office.

Stone, who owns a chain of stations under the Thrifty Gas Stations name, was cited earlier this year by the EPA on eight counts of having excessive amounts of methanol alcohol in his fuel and five counts of excessive amounts of ethanol alcohol. He faces fines of more than \$100,000 on those counts.

Akerman said the EPA again is looking into the possibility of civil action in

regard to the bad gasoline sold in March.

STONE WILL have 10 days to contact the state attorney general's office before a class action suit is authorized, according to Fred Hoffecker, an assistant attorney general.

"It is our belief that the sale violated the Consumer Protection Act," Hoffecker told the Observer Tuesday.

He said some 40 to 50 complaints about the gas sale have been lodged with the attorney general's consumer protection division. Stone reportedly has refused requests for reimbursement to his insurance company — American States Insurance.

"It is a belief that the insurance company is hedging that triggered our action," Hoffecker said.

A spokesman for the insurance company, Paul Blunk, told the Observer Tuesday that the company is waiting for test results before settling any claims.

"We are waiting for some chemist to tell us whether the product caused the damage," Blunk said. "We can't pay without documentation. If the tests confirm that what we sold was faulty, we will be happy to pay."

Melnik said he received EPA results but that "it didn't nail it down." The EPA's Akerman told the Observer no

one has received test results from his agency.

Melnik said motorists waiting for reimbursement should continue to "hang onto their bills until the proof comes in."

Hoffecker said a class action suit could be avoided if Stone contacts the attorney general's office and agrees to work out an administrative settlement.

County officials earlier said motorists who sustained damage to their vehicles because of the bad gas should retain proof of their purchases, proof of repairs, and a statement from the mechanic that the gasoline was suspected of causing the damages.

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By Raymond E. Bullock
special writer

The author is coordinator of the planetarium and observatory at Cranbrook Institute of Science.

Should our local weather conditions permit, we will be able to witness a partial eclipse of the sun on Wednesday, May 30, from 11:14 a.m. to 3:09 p.m.

An eclipse of the sun occurs when the moon, orbiting around the earth, appears to cover the sun's disk. Since the moon completes an orbit each month, why don't we have eclipses more often?

If the moon's orbit exactly matched the ecliptic (the sun's apparent path), there would be a solar eclipse each month. But the lunar orbit is tilted five

degrees with respect to the sun, so the moon must cross the ecliptic twice each month. The crossing point is called a "node." Most of the time the moon's orbit appears to pass above or below the sun. Only when the sun and moon line up at a node can an eclipse occur.

IN ADDITION, the moon's orbit drifts from year to year, causing the node points to drift along the ecliptic. The eclipse of May 1984 is not repeated each May. Not only that, should the sun and moon reach a node at night (our time) we obviously will not see the eclipse. It will only be visible to people on the daylight side of earth, and not everyone on the daylight side will see it either because the shadow cast by the moon is small.

Add to all these conditions the fact that the moon's orbit around the earth is not circular, but elliptical (oval).

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**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS
REGULAR PUBLIC HEARING
May 21, 1984**

Mayor Williams opened the regular meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council on May 21, 1984 at 7:30 P.M. Members present: Alkateeb, Amislove, Dolan, Jolley, Soroczen, Williams and Wolf. Others present: City Manager Savage, Assistant City Manager Cook, City Attorney Frohman and Planning Commission Coates.

Resolutions 3, 4 and 6 were approved for water improvement on Salem and Valley Roads in Section 12, setting public hearing date of June 18, 1984.

Council introduced Zoning Map Amendment C-324 (Z-10-84) to remove property at 15505 Middlebelt Road from RA-1 to RC-3 at the request of John Molnar, proponent.

Council introduced Zoning Map Amendment C-325 (Z-11-84) to remove property at 15540 Orchard Lake Road, between Lamar and Rockdale, from RC-1 to OS-1.

Council introduced Zoning Map Amendment C-326 (Z-12-84) to remove lots 35, 36, 37 and 38 of Superiors Plat of Westhill Woods Subdivision from RC-1 to OS-2.

Introduction of Zoning Map Amendment C-327 (Z-13-84) to remove 1.5 acres of land from RA-1A to OS-1, shown in Section 13 was adjourned to June 18th meeting at request of the proponent David Green.

Council denied Introduction of Zoning Map Amendment C-328 (Z-13-84) to remove property at 38100 Twelve Mile Road from RA-1 to OS-1.

Council introduced Zoning Map Amendment C-329 (Z-13-84) to remove property at 24950 Haggerty Road from RA-1 to RD-1.

Introduction of Zoning Map Amendment C-330 (Z-17-84) to remove 3.69 acres land east of intersection of Grand River and Ten Mile from LI-1 to B-3, was adjourned at request of the proponent Bill Cook.

Council approved Ordinance No. C-13-84 to convey easement to Northstar Associates (Starway Lane Apartments) for ingress and egress of property located to the City. Summary of ordinance for publication was also approved.

Council instructed staff to study development of zoning text language which would require the submission of a community impact statement for all special zoning and Planning Commission to develop recommendations on this issue.

Resolutions 1 and 2 were approved for water improvement on Eight Mile, Grosse Pointe and Motorview proposed district, setting public hearing date for June 18, 1984.

Council approved Resolution 1 and 2 for road paving on Lady Street in Section 9, setting public hearing date for June 18, 1984.

Council approved Resolution 1 and 2 for road paving on Lady Street in Section 9, setting public hearing date for June 18, 1984.

Council approved proposed resolution for adoption, establishing a public hearing with possible increase of term at 0.6669 mile in official notice for public comment on June 4, 1984 on budget.

Council set public hearing date for June 18, 1984 for vacation of utility easement on Yorkshire in Section 10.

An executive session was held immediately following Council meeting in the case city manager's contract.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 P.M.

Published May 24, 1984

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