

# Fraud charged

## Shop owner will pay refunds

Four transmission shops — including one in Farmington Hills — are permanently closed and their owner will pay \$25,000 into a revolving fund for customer claims made against them.

A settlement was reached in civil charges filed against four independent transmission franchises and their owner James Schotten, according to Assistant Michigan Attorney General Fred Hoffecker.

The fund will cover claims of fraudulent repairs against the local shop, at 22335 Middlebelt, at the corner of Nine Mile, and others in Westland, Lansing and Dearborn Heights. All are owned by Schotten.

A fifth independent transmission shop, on Six Mile in Detroit, not owned by Schotten and not charged with civil or criminal wrongdoing, will handle any necessary warranty work as part of the settlement, Hoffecker said.

This is the first settlement of 13 civil cases filed by the state against transmission shops and their owners on Aug. 12.

The administrative orders were filed by the state attorney general and secretary of state offices, following a three-month undercover investigation called Operation Shift.

The civil actions were taken under the state's Consumer Protection Act.

THE CIVIL charges are in addition to criminal charges filed against Schotten and the shop's manager, James Dillon, who are scheduled to stand trial in Oakland County Circuit Court on felony counts of obtaining money under false pretenses.

"The fund will be set up to resolve

complaints," Hoffecker said. The Bureau of Automotive Regulation, a division of the secretary of state's office, will arbitrate the complaints and control the fund, paid by Schotten.

In other parts of the settlement, Schotten will lose his business license and cannot apply for another one during the next five years, Hoffecker said. A \$10,000 penalty was also levied by the state and he was ordered to pay expenses incurred during the investigation.

Any customers who want to file claims, or who have questions about whether to file a claim against one of the four independent transmission shops, should call the Bureau of Automotive Regulation at 357-5108.

## Chiefs attend forum

The Farmington area was well represented at the 53rd annual International Association of Chiefs of Police Conference Oct. 5-9 at the Opryland Hotel, Nashville.

Chief William Dwyer and Deputy Chief Muri Spencer represented the Farmington Hills Police Department. Director Frank Lauhoff represented the Farmington Department of Public Safety.

Representatives came from many non-Communist countries, including Australia, China, Japan and Canada. "It was very interesting," said Lauhoff, attending his second conference.

"It's always worthwhile. The most worthwhile thing is to get out and be exposed to a lot of different ideas and other people's approaches to problems."

Workshops and seminars focused on such timely police topics as drug testing in the workplace, use of deadly force, performance evaluation and management techniques.

Dwyer has attended five conferences. "You get a lot out of it if you spend the time attending the workshops, going through the exhibit halls and reading the literature," he said.

The international contacts you make with local and federal law enforcement authorities can't help but prove beneficial, he added.

## Local man wins prize

A Farmington Hills ticket holder, George Geer, had his name drawn for the 13th prize awarded in a raffle sponsored by the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 114 in Livonia. The raffle was held to raise money for a Memorial Home building.

A St. Clair Shores couple were the grand prize winners of the raffle, for which 80,000 tickets were sold. They won a \$40,000 Vaux motorhome. Lowell McKeehan is commander of the DAV chapter.

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