O&E Monday, November 17, 1986 Business Watch program organized



types of business.
"The bu sinesses are saying,
"We're organized, we're trained, and
we're willing to call the police and
work together," he said. "They're
willing to get involved.
"We want to organize every business in the city."

THE PUBLIC safety department will offer security surveys, tips on how to open and close a business, burglary prevention techniques and other information during training

Farmington's business and civic leaders hope to "give the message to the bad guy to go somewhere clee," in the words of one official. Department of Public Safety officials are joining with members of the Downtown Farmington Business Association, a recently formed merchants group, to begin a Business Watch program for the city's commercial base, which includes about 260 businesses.

Armed with the idea of helping ther membership during the holiday ahopping — and shoplifting — season, DFIA members approached the Farmington Department of Public Safety, which was already working on the idea.

The Business Watch program

on the idea.

The Business Watch program would be similar to the already established Neighborhood Watch resi-

tablished Neighborhood Watch resi-dential program.

The program would pass informa-tion through the public safety de-partment back to businesspeople along a network, notifying everyone involved about potential shoplifters, suspicious persons, or other prob-lems.

lems.
Commander Chuck Lee of the Farmington Department of Public Safety is heading the city-sponsored program, which will provide on-site

'The businesses are saying 'We're organized, we're trained and we're willing to call the police and work together''

— Commander Chuck Lee Farmington Department of Public Safety

ness type, such as pharmacies, gas stations and others that are related. Johan Soronen, executive director of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce and chamber ialson to the DFBA, said such a pro-gram will be "ideal" for the city of

gram will be "ideal" for the city of Farmington.
She sald merchants discussed a watch program as the holiday season moved closer and "there are more people in the store. Their people will have less time to keep an eye on peo-ple (shoplifters.) I would think such a

program will work especially well in a smaller area."

"INCIDENTS OBVIOUSLY hap-pen all the time," Soronen said. "We thought this was something of real value we could offer." She said it also would be a boon to local stores of national-chains, who often cannot get involved with other programs at the local level because of policy and budget problems. This program should save local businesses money, not cost them, or-

ganizers said. According to informa-tion from Lee, residents and busi-nesspeople nationally lose more than 330 billion deliars to theft, and 33 percent of the loss is in the business

retail sector.
Farmington's Neighborhood Watch program, started three years ago, has given the city a 43-percent decrease in daytime residential burglaries. Lee said he hopes the Business Watch program will eventually have a similar impact for business. The city of Farmington Hills already has a Business Watch program in place, and holds periodic workshops for local businesses, ac-

cording to Soronen, who also sits on the Hills city council. Signs and stickers in business win-dows will be used in the Farmington program, similar to the Neighbor-hood Watch signs at subdivision en-trances. But he said involvement is the key to making the signs work.

"The signs themselves will not have the effect," he said. "Eventually, the local bad guy will know you only have a sign."

Lee will address a Dec. 13 DFBA meeting to get the program under way in the downtown Farmington area.

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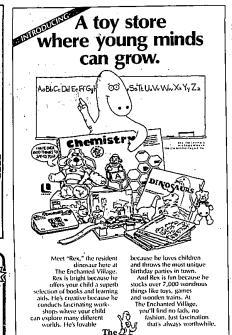
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