

# City cracking down on false alarms

By Casey Hane  
staff writer

The statistics are alarming. Of 600 burglary alarms logged by the Farmington Department of Public Safety in 1985, 97 percent were false alarms, according to director Frank Lauboff.

He thinks that number can be reduced.

At Lauboff's request, the city council introduced an ordinance amendment Monday that would make it a misdemeanor violation for a building owner — residential or commercial — to allow an audible alarm to ring for more than 15 minutes anywhere in the city.

The amendment would change a portion of the city code listed under "nuisances." The council vote was unanimous.

Audible alarms in both commercial buildings and residential houses cause problems, Frank Lauboff said, although most of the problems come from the residential sector. A common situation arises when a resident sets an audible house alarm and goes out of town. If the alarm is tripped by weather problems or other factors, it will continue to ring until the residents return home.



"It's created a problem," Lauboff said.

CITY MANAGER Robert Deadman said the alarms "can be a severe nuisance to neighboring properties."

Alarm owners can change equipment, modify their equipment, or "assure it will be turned off in 15 minutes by a neighbor or someone else," Lauboff said. "They're responsible for their own alarm systems."

When the ordinance takes effect, all businesses in the city will be sent notification of the ordinance, as well as residents who have had audible alarm problems in the past, Lauboff said.

The city does not have a list of all the alarms installed in the city, as owners are not required to register them.

The proposed Farmington ordinance change follows the lead of other area communities, including West Bloomfield Township, which has a similar restriction, and the city of Troy, which is considering a similar change.

Today's modern alarm systems can be installed to shut off the audible signal, Lauboff said. Most of these residential alarms are set to shut off within eight minutes; commercial alarms within 10 minutes.

IN ADDITION to the audible alarm change, the city will continue to charge a \$25 civil fine for each false alarm call not related to weather or natural disasters, Lauboff said.

Most of these "excessive" false alarms are related to either weather or employee error. Under the ordinance, residents and businesses are allowed two false alarms in one month, or four in a calendar year before they are placed on notice and charged. The \$25 fee is "to cover

some of the expenses, but we're also encouraging the owners of the alarms to have them repaired," Lauboff added.

The ordinance also continues to require approval of any automati-

cally dialed telephone number relating to the alarm system. Permission for an alarm system to ring directly into the public safety department "is not usually granted because during storm periods . . . the telephone sys-

tem . . . could be inundated by false alarm calls," Deadman added.

The public safety department will issue violations and enforce the ordinance once the amendment has passed, Lauboff said.

## Logs become furniture

By Tom Baer  
staff writer

Chain saws buzzed and sputtered, bulldozers rumbled and snorted, and perhaps even an occasional axe rang out. Timber was being harvested in Rochester Hills.

Oak and ash trees covering 10 acres near Livernois and Drexelgate were felled last month and trucked off to an upstate lumber mill to be made into furniture.

The Sisters of Mercy in Farmington Hills sold the trees to Maple Ridge Hardwoods Inc. of Sterling, Mich., north of Bay City. The Mercy Services for the Aging will build a "continuing care retirement community" on the site.

To be known as Bellbrook, the project will be finished by the end of

1987 or early 1988, a spokesperson for the Sisters of Mercy said.

PHASE ONE of the project will include congregate apartments, a home for the aged and a skilled nursing center, the spokesperson said. Dave Zimmer, a timber buyer for Maple Ridge, estimated the harvest at 35,000-40,000 board feet.

The oldest trees were 120 years old, Zimmer said, and showing signs of age with rotten cores. "This wasn't an especially well-managed woodlot," he said.

The clearing of the small forest took some nearby residents by surprise. "We kind of took the trees for granted," said a resident. "One day they were there, the next they weren't. And the place looks like an old-fashioned lumber camp."

## EDM Division is purchased

The assets of the Farmington-based Easco-Sparacron Division of EDM Industries Inc. were recently sold to Liquid Drive Corp., which plans to move the division from the city.

The division, with its 26 jobs, will be moved from 32840 Eight Mile and consolidated at the new owner's location in Green Oaks Township.

The Farmington City Council voted Dec. 1 to allow the change and

grant an Industrial Facilities Exemption Certificate. The certificate is needed for the company to attain tax abatement at its new location.

"The city of Farmington has not had a problem with vacancies in our industrial areas," City Manager Robert Deadman told the council in recommending it grant the certificate. "The buildings along Eight Mile have historically rented well."

## School musicians set benefit

The Farmington High combined choir and orchestra will give a benefit concert at 8 p.m. Thursday, at the school, 32000 Shawwassee.

Admission is \$1.50 at the door. All proceeds will go to Farmington Pub-

lic Schools' Cloverdale Training Center.

Grant Hoemke and Margaret Koltz will direct the group performance.



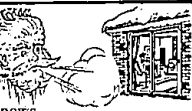
## Top honors

North Farmington High senior David Harlow (center) was awarded a second-place certificate and programmable calculator by Lawrence Institute of Technology for outstanding performance on the Junior Engineering Technical Society National Engineering Aptitude Search Test. Two other North seniors, Kenneth Lipka (second from left) and Todd

Roshek (second from right), were awarded honorable mentions. All three live in Farmington Hills. Dr. Robert Ellis (far right), LIT dean of engineering, presented the awards. North principal G. Donald Cowan also is pictured. More than 300 students took the exam. Winners placed in the top 5 percent.

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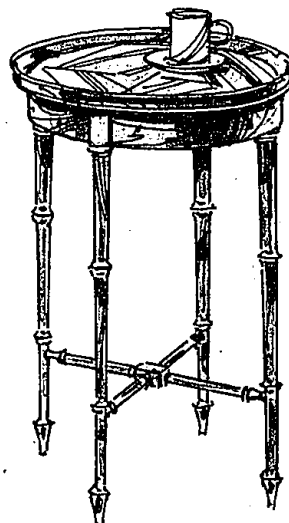
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