

# Michigan National to use hair in drug testing

By Janice Brunson  
staff-writer

Michigan National Corp. is the type of company that members of the advisory committee on crime prevention for the Farmington Hills Police Department like to point out.

The firm, a Farmington Hills-based holding company that employs 6,800 people, is the first and only Michigan company currently conducting drug testing on locks of hair from prospective employees.

Earlier this month, the firm announced the program may be expanded at some future date to include employees, providing legal ramifications are resolved. For now, employees may participate in volunteer testing.

The advisory committee, formed last April to assist Farmington Hills in combating crime, has targeted substance abuse in a "Say No To Drugs" campaign and is planning a seminar on drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace on Oct. 5.

While Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer is unfamiliar with hair analysis, he said, "There is a place in the work location for drug screening, either on

a voluntary basis or negotiated by the union. It protects both employers and employees." Dwyer chairs the advisory committee.

NATIONAL CORP. initiated testing the hair of prospective employees rather than the more familiar urine testing, because hair analysis is more precise and accurate, less offensive and more economical, according to Wayne Carey, corporate director of staff relations for the company.

Carey said the company's test involves snipping a one-inch lock of hair from the nape of an applicant's neck and sending it to a California lab for analysis. Of 900 applicants who have been tested, 18 have tested positive.

In the volunteer program offered to employees, Carey said more than 100 people have participated, including members of both the bank board and the corporate board of directors.

The number, he added, indicates the program has been readily accepted.

Identifying employees who abuse alcohol or drugs and getting them into treatment programs enhances

productivity and motivation on the job, reduces work-related accidents and increases company morale, according to Dwyer.

Howard Simon, executive director of the Michigan ACLU, agrees but said testing to identify those in need of assistance is little more than "a faddish solution to a serious problem."

"Testing is destructive to good employer-employee relations. The trouble with it is it doesn't zero in on those who are abusive and presumes everyone is guilty."

"EDUCATION, NOT TESTING, is the solution," Simon said, citing the campaign in recent years to reduce cigarette smoking. "We publicized warnings, listed medical dangers, the surgeon general reviewed the consequences. Through education, cigarette smoking has been cut drastically."

Drug testing, Simon added, brings into question accuracy of tests, worker dignity and what an employer needs to and has the right to know about an employee. Testing reveals information "that is none of the employer's or anybody else's business."

Dwyer, however, said he feels "the fight against drug abuse in the workplace is the responsibility of all of us. The seminar (on Oct. 5) is to better educate employers about employee drug use."

Betty Nicolay, a member of the advisory committee and chair of Farmington Families in Action, calls substance abuse a health problem comparable to diseases such as tuberculosis.

"I think testing should be mandatory. To say substance abuse doesn't affect (work) performance just doesn't hold water," she said.

Over 3,200 area employers and businesses have been invited to participate in the Oct. 5 seminar.

In addition to Dwyer, featured speakers will be Jan Cotter of the Maplegrove Alcoholism Chemical Dependency Treatment Center speaking on treatment programs and Farmington Hills attorney Tim Kenny speaking on legal ramifications of drug testing in the work place.

The seminar is co-sponsored by the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce. Reservations are due Sept. 15. For more information or to register, call 474-3440.

## IRS plans tax seminar for new store owners

Are you a new business owner? Or one who started in business recently?

The IRS is holding a free tax workshop for you in Farmington at the Farmington Community Library, 23500 Liberty, Sept. 14.

Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. An IRS instructor will discuss topics such as proper record-keeping and accounting practices, keeping track of expenses and income and tax filing requirements. Practical exercises will help small business owners learn how to prepare Forms 941 and 940 and how to compute and deposit taxes for income, Social Security and federal unemployment.

If you would like to know more about the tax aspects of owning your own business, call the Taxpayer Education Coordinator at 1-800-424-1040, ext. 3674, to register for the free Small Business Tax Workshop.

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## C'ville announces back-to-school hours

Hey, Clarenceville kids, it's back-to-school time. Residents in the southeast corner of Farmington Hills attend Clarenceville schools.

All kindergarten through 12th grade students will attend a half-day session Tuesday, Aug. 30. Full-day classes will begin Wednesday, Aug. 31, except for kindergartners.

For students in grades kindergarten through fifth, the Aug. 30 half-day will be from 8:52-11:35 a.m.

During the half-day Aug. 30, middle school students will attend school from 8:20-11:05 a.m. Sixth graders will meet in the learning center, seventh graders at the gymnasium bleachers and eighth graders in the cafeteria.

High school students will attend classes Aug. 30 from 7:40-10:35 a.m.

**Clarenceville School District officials urge parents of students starting school in the district to register them immediately at the school.**

Registration hours are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

AUG. 31, morning kindergarten classes will meet from 8:52-11:35 a.m. while afternoon classes will meet from 12:22-3:05 p.m.

Also beginning Aug. 31, first through fifth graders will attend school from 8:52 a.m. to 3:05 p.m., middle school students from 8:20 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. and high school students from 7:40 a.m. to 2:05 p.m.

Clarenceville School District officials

urge parents of students starting school in the district to register them immediately at the school. Registration hours are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call Botford Elementary at 473-8911 or Grandview Elementary at 473-8913.

OFFICIALS REMIND parents that Michigan law requires all students to be adequately immunized.

Records for all students entering kindergarten and students enrolled from outside the district will be reviewed by the district.

Parents may sign a waiver if they have religious, medical or other objections to immunizations.

By the Clarenceville High School attendance policy, students with five unexcused absences will be removed from class without credit. The schools have a 24-hour answering service for attendance calls, at 477-2140.

The district also is starting day care programs this year. A child care program will run from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Botford. A latch-key program will run from 7 a.m. until school begins and after school until 6 p.m. at Botford and Grandview.

For information, call 473-8933.

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