

Man gets 10-year prison sentence for conspiracy

A 30-year-old Farmington Hills man was sentenced to one to 10 years in prison for his part in a scheme to defraud the state out of day care money intended for needy children.

Dominic Palmieri, operator of the Take Five video store in Novi, also was required to pay \$35,000 in restitution as part of the sentence, handed down Oct. 24 by Recorder's Court Judge William Leo Cahalan of Detroit.

"The sentence would have been much higher, but he was cooperative with the authorities," Cahalan said in a phone interview Oct. 25. "Because he was cooperative, I put the sentence at one to 10."

C. Patrick Babcock, Michigan Department of Social Services director, called the sentence too lenient. He cited not only the amount of money involved, but the diversion of money from needy children.

Palmieri was required to turn himself in Tuesday to begin his sentence.

OCT. 3, Palmieri testified that he and former Michigan Department of Social Services supervisor Terry Dale Brenner, 41, of Lansing conspired to defraud the state out of day care money.

Appearing before Oakland County Circuit Judge James Thorburn Oct. 24, Brenner pleaded guilty to conspiracy. Sentencing was scheduled for today.

Palmieri received \$308,000 in phony day care payments from Brenner, but kept "about 10 percent of it," said his attorney, William Bufalino II of St. Clair Shores. The rest of the money was kicked back to Brenner.

OVERALL, THE scheme cost the state some \$628,000, said Robert Ianni, assistant state attorney general.

Palmieri used a portion of the money to support a cocaine habit, Bufalino said.

"I thought the judge was very cognizant of the complete facts in the case," Bufalino said. "He (Palmieri) was treated fairly by the court."

Palmieri could be eligible for parole after serving some "two-thirds" of the one-year sentence, court officials said.

BRENNER, FORMER director of the DSS Family and Child Services placement services division, pleaded guilty to similar fraud charges in Ingham and Livingston counties. He faces up to 10 years in prison on those charges.

Between August 1987 and June 1988, Brenner allegedly turned checks over to at least 10 men who posed as DSS day care operators. He then accepted kickbacks from those phony operations in Ingham, Wayne, Oakland and Livingston counties.

State Attorney General Frank Kelley called the scandal the largest involving state funds in his 25-year tenure.

Novi News reporter Phil Ginotti contributed to this report.

Cellular phone towers are sprouting up

By Jeff Counts staff writer

The number of towers to handle car telephone conversations in metro Detroit has increased from 11 to 58 over four years, and more are on the way as more people opt to buy cellular phones to either chat with their friends or make business calls.

In the Detroit area, there was a 156 percent increase in cellular use this year compared to 35 percent nationwide, according to Ameritech Mobile, which considers Oakland County as one of the fastest growing areas.

Farmington Hills was approached by Ameritech Mobile about building a tower, but the city asked them to try putting their equipment on an existing tower, said Ed Gardiner, of the planning staff.

"They put it on a tower at 12 Mile and I-696," he said, adding that there was no objection from the community.

GARDINER SAID the township has a 50-foot height limit on towers, and that further requests will be handled by the zoning board of appeals, which will have to rule on requests for higher towers needed by cellular firms. Cellular towers must be at least 120 feet, he said.

"There are only two firms, Ameritech and Cellular One," he said. "We've satisfied Ameritech and we expect to hear from Cellular One."

Gardiner said that a couple of years ago there were no such requests.

West Bloomfield Township is working on a zoning ordinance to cover the location of cellular telephone towers, while other communities have systems in place to handle their location.

But for the cellular firms, there's a contradiction in the locating of a tower. "It seems like where we get the most demand, we also get the most opposition," said Bob Brown, an Ameritech Mobile manager who oversees the Detroit market.

"I just wish the people that use the service would go to the public hearings," he said.

"WE NEED a lot of support from the people who use the phones to get

the towers in," said Tom Adams, of Ameritech's Southfield office.

The number of towers needed depends on the density of use and not just distance, said Brown, who added that each tower can handle only a certain number of calls.

"We're monitoring them all the time," he said. "As we see them getting busy, we start looking for a new site."

He said finding a site usually takes about a year.

Adams said the Detroit Ameritech system covers about 5,000 square miles and is broken down into a grid system, where a tower is needed about every 10 miles.

He said the company splits cells when the demand in an area becomes great. Splitting a cell improves service, and is done in two phases, first by adding capacity to the existing tower and then by building a new tower.

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP has about six towers in place, said Supervisor Fred Korzon, adding that the township's zoning board of appeals has handled the construction and it "has worked out pretty well."

In Birmingham one tower went up about a year ago at Maple and Eton roads, but the 100-foot plus structure didn't generate any community opposition.

Rochester Hills doesn't have any cellular towers yet, and doesn't have any requests for them.

"I don't even think they could put them up here," said Jim Schmidt, Rochester Hills community relations officer. "We've got a height limit and we don't even have a two-story building here."

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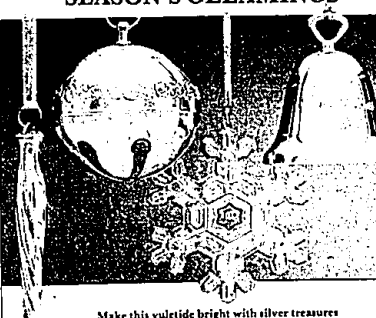
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"I always expected," Joan Young said, "that the oldest boy would grow up and do something terrible."

"I got a call one night from a local police department that the mother had been jailed for drunk driving. She had the three boys with her in the car. They were five, three, and one. The police wanted me to come and get the kids. Around this same time, the five-year-old killed his puppy."


If you talk with Joan Young, she'll tell you that children are the biggest concern of the Oakland County Probate Court. More than half the court's cases have to do with the well-being of children, with the stability of their lives, with the illegal things some of them do, and with the possibility of their futures.

Joan Young began preparing for the job of probate judge when she started her public service career 19 years ago as a social worker. She's been a trial lawyer, a family law attorney, and administrator of Oakland County's Circuit Court, Michigan's busiest.

She wants you to think about the children of our communities. She wants you to think about our responsibility to protect those children from abuse and neglect and mistreatment; our responsibility to provide those children with guidance and hope and opportunity. That's so much of what a probate judge's work is all about. And she's ready and prepared to go to work for you.

Put Joan Young to work for you and your family and all the families of Oakland County. Vote for her for Oakland County Probate Judge, Tuesday, November 8.

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Authorized and paid for by Joan Young for Probate Judge Committee, 5435 Corporate Drive, Suite 275, Troy, MI 48068, Fernal Greenwald, Treasurer.