

Police investigate sexual assault allegations

By Casey Hana
staff writer

Two cases of reported sexual assault in two different Farmington Hills elementary schools last November continue to be investigated, according to police and school officials.

So far, one case appears to be unsubstantiated and criminal warrants are being sought in the other, investigators said.

The two accused male employees at both Wooddale and Kenbrook elementary schools remain on paid leave pending the outcome of the investigations by school officials and police. Neither man has been charged with a crime.

The cases, both reported in early November, are unrelated, said police and school officials.

Criminal warrants are being sought against a male employee at Kenbrook who is accused of sexually assaulting an 11-year-old student on Nov. 9. Police have been waiting for several weeks for the Oakland County prosecutor's office to make a decision on the case, said Farmington Hills Police Inspector Thomas Godwin.

Kenbrook is in the 13 Mile/Oakdale area.

"Really, everything is pretty much status quo," Godwin said. "It's in the hands of the prosecutors."

AT WOODDALE, near 13 Mile and Farmington Road, both police and school officials investigating the case involving an employee and a fifth grader say accusations against the employee there appear to be unsubstantiated. This case is now in the hands of the state Department of Social Services officials and the Oakland County Probate Court, Godwin said.

Although the investigation remains open, "to date, none of the charges have been substantiated," said Sue Zurvallec, Farmington Public Schools employee relations director, who is conducting the investigation on behalf of the district.

Godwin said police information had been turned over to the courts, and that specialist physicians had been called in to work on the case of the Wooddale youngster. "We have not requested any warrants," he added.

Police and schools have not released the names of the employees in the two cases, or details of the accusations.

Temporarily removing an employee from a school building is not a disciplinary measure but rather a precaution for the employee and the school involved, according to Zurvallec.

In light of the incidents, Farmington schools sent home a letter to elementary parents in mid-November, assuring them "the Farmington schools provide safe and secure environments for children to learn."

Weather brings accidents, power outages

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and service. "Unlike other winter storms, outages this time were scattered throughout Oakland County."

FARMINGTON HILLS DPW crews of 6-7 equipment operators were called to work six different times throughout the weekend to plow and salt major roadways and steep inclines.

Part of the problem was that ice on the roads from freezing rain became harder to fight as temperatures warmed, then fell, and snow

showers dusted the already difficult roadways, Rooney said. "It just turned to ice."

"We were lucky in that we didn't have a full-fledged ice storm where trees fall from the ice," Rooney said.

Despite the winter blast, Rooney isn't ready to say this will be a bad winter. Right now, he said, it just seems that way because of the past two mild winters.

Throughout the weekend, news reports highlighted Farmington Hills traffic lights that were out or work-

ing improperly. Among those intersections were Drake and 12 Mile, Grand River and Halsted and Elgin and 1-275.

OTHER PROBLEMS reported in Farmington:

- A transformer fire at Grand River and Drake about 1 a.m. Sunday caused loss of electrical power in the western half of the city, according to Farmington public safety officer Hilton Hyde.
- Oak Hill Care Center on Grand River also lost power early Sunday morning, and a generator problem caused Community EMS to be placed on standby until it was repaired. Later that morning, the generator went down again, causing emergency medical personnel to transport five patients to Botsford General Hospital, where they were placed on ventilators. The Farmington Department of Public Safety helped give patients oxygen.
- Between late Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon, there were five accidents in Farmington and an additional three answered by the city and turned over to Farmington Hills. "We had lots of accidents, but nothing serious," Hyde said.

• No power lines were down in Farmington.

• Cars slid down the Shiawassee hill in Farmington until salt trucks could be called in.

In Farmington Hills:

- Police logged more than 50 alarms from noon Saturday through Sunday, many the result of power surges.
- Other calls to police included arcing wires, transformer fires and pole fires.
- No serious traffic accidents occurred from the ice and snow, but police logged more than 20 property damage accidents between noon Saturday and 12 a.m. Monday.

Hills auto repair mall planned

A half-acre on the west side of Middlebelt, between Grand River and Belfast, is in line to be rezoned from small office to general business.

Architect David Donnellon and owner David Fordon plan to use the land in conjunction with an acre to the north to build an auto repair mall.

At the planning commission's recommendation, the Farmington Hills City Council introduced the rezoning Dec. 18. Approval is expected this month.

Councilwoman Jean Fox was the only dissenter. She believes the area has enough auto repair shops.

The half-acre, in Brookside Park subdivision, has 140 feet of frontage on Middlebelt.

The master plan calls for multiple-family residential use. But the planning commission said the requested land use would be compatible with existing and future land uses in the area.

If the land is rezoned, business could be contained to the west by existing apartments and to the south by a creek, planners said.


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