

MADD offers safe ride home

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Public awareness of the ever-tightening penalties for driving drunk has had an effect on New Year's Eve celebrations and on how establishments treat customers who've had one too many.

Even so, the Mothers Against Drunk Driving will provide a ride home for anyone who asks for one.

"Anyone anywhere in the tri-county area who asks for a ride will be given one," said Ron Eaton, president of the Oakland County MADD chapter. "We expect 700 to 800 requests for rides this year."

That number is up from previ-

ous years, in part, because of new, more strict drunk driving laws. But several local bar owners say fewer patrons need the service.

"They're (customers) drinking more responsibly," said Dennis Page, owner of Page's Food and Spirits in Farmington. "I think that's because of the tougher penalties (for driving drunk). People are waking up."

Page's will have a deejay and dancing with no cover, but with the awareness about alcohol and driving, New Year's Eve business is not as brisk as in the past, Page said.

New Year's Eve business is also too lean at Cowley's Old Village

Inn in Farmington to justify the expense of entertainment, said owner John Cowley.

"We'll be open as usual," Cowley said. "But the band would cost too much. This is the first time in 21 years that we haven't had one."

Cowley said he will call a cab for any customer who needs a ride home, but the trick is to avoid the need.

"We don't let 'em get that way," he said.

At Clancy's Bar and Grill in Farmington Hills, manager Veto Pacetti will either call a cab or personally drive home a patron who's had too much to drink. "My practice here, anytime during the year, is that we give them a ride home," Pacetti said.

Eaton said the increased response to MADD's Life Ride campaign, which offers cab rides to those who are too drunk to drive, is a positive step to save lives.

"We have to give everyone who asks a ride," he said. "If we didn't, and somebody was killed, we couldn't live with it."

About 2,000 residents, too drunk to drive, were kept off of the tri-county roads last New Year's Eve, he said. One call involved five cabs to transport 20 people from one party, Eaton said.

Although anyone calling the Life Ride number, 353-1893, will be given a ride, there can be up to a two-hour wait, he said.

"We ask the cab companies to be prepared, have extra people," Eaton said. "But there is a big demand."

Sgt. Ray Cranston, traffic specialist with the Farmington Hills Police, said the department does not offer free rides on New Year's Eve.

"We tell our liquor establishments that that is their responsibility," he said.

Gary Goss, acting public safety director in Farmington, said manpower limitations don't allow his officers to transport bar patrons on New Year's Eve.

"We only have three officers on the road that evening," he said. "We can't get into that type of operation."

Public safety officers to get new locker room

Farmington public safety officers will soon have a new locker room in which to hang their hats. Construction of the \$37,000 project starts in mid-January and is pegged for completion in March.

The new facility will be in the basement of city hall and features 400 square feet of space, 32 half lockers (20 for men; 12 for women), as well as separate shower and restroom facilities.

Officers have had to store clothes in engine room lockers and change in a squad room.

"Most of the stuff we have now is makeshift," said deputy public safety director Gary Goss. "This will be a big improvement."

A new locker room also allows the department to more easily comply with health policies regarding blood-borne pathogens, especially with the threat of AIDS.

On the job, public safety officers frequently come into con-

tact with blood and other bodily fluids and as a result are required to change uniforms at the station.

Plans for the project started in March and include recommendations made by an employee committee of three officers, a commander and a dispatcher.

The design has been modified and means the loss three feet of floor space. But the city will save money, as original plans required the change of the employees' entrance and major structural work.

Robert Allen of John Architect said the design allows for easy expansion to include more women employees. At the present, there are two female officers and seven other women on staff.

Updated locker room facilities weren't a pressing issue 10 years ago, according to Goss. Since many of the officers lived nearby, they would simply change at home after fighting a fire.

BIRTHS

Gerald and Carolyn Storey of Farmington Hills announced the birth of a son, Sean Stephen, on Sept. 29, 1992.

He weighed 9 pounds, 3 ounces and was 21 inches long at birth. He was born at 2:14 p.m. at

Huron Valley Hospital in Commerce Township.

The grandparents are JoAnn and Ronald Buehler of Harland, and Alfred Kenneth and Esther Storey of Garland, Texas.

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on election night. The task is usually handled by the clerk and deputy clerk who work along with a systems analyst and a voter registration clerk.

Farmington city clerk Patsy Cantrell figures a school election costs \$265.

"The cost for the city is very minimal because we do this as part of our regular day," Cantrell said.

Neither city bills the school district.

Both city clerks said there hasn't been an increase in voter registration because of the school election. That's no surprise since this was a presidential election year.

"Most people would have got their registration in line then," Rose said. "Mostly, it would be

people who have just moved here."

Voters initially approved 5 mills to expire in 1992, 5 mills to expire in 1993 and 4 mills to expire in 1994. But increases in school income were limited to the rate of inflation by the 1978 Headlee Amendment.

The board initially considered a second ballot proposal that would've allowed taxes to rise faster than the rate of inflation, thus implementing a Headlee override. Members decided to just stick with the renewal.

"We just dodged the bullet with Proposal C," Barrett said. "Unfortunately, the governor and the legislature can still come up with a legislation package with those components in it."



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