

'Cops in Shops' targets underage drinking

BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The advertisement has an underage boy trying to buy beer when a plain-clothes police officer asks him for some identification.

"I'll tell you what," the officer says. "I'll go first." He then shows his badge and arrests the youngster.

That procedure will become a reality as Farmington Hills police are trying a new approach to an old problem beginning Friday and for the rest of the summer.

Friday morning at 10 a.m., owners and managers of many of the city's stores licensed to sell alcoholic beverages will gather at city hall to learn about the "Cops in Shops" program. The program targets people less than 21 who attempt to buy alcohol and adults who buy alcohol for underage drinkers.

"We are the first community in the tri-county (Wayne, Macomb and Oakland) area to initiate this program," said Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer. "Area teenagers will find it tougher than ever this summer to buy alcohol in Farmington

WARNING
co-officers may be posing as store employees.



Hills."

Hills police began conducting liquor stings beginning in 1986 as a result of several drunken driving accidents involving underage drinking. That operation involved having a decoy, usually a police cadet age 19 or younger.

Under the sting method, the cadet would attempt to buy alco-

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Bill Dwyer
—Hills police chief

hol and would leave if the clerk asked for identification. If the youth were served, the clerk was ticketed and the establishment would face possible penalties from the state Liquor Control Commission.

Dwyer said although that program had been effecting, drunken driving arrests and underage drinking are again increasing.

"I think most of the store owners have made a lot of efforts to stop selling to underage buyers," he said. "But we think this will be more effective because it puts some of the penalty on the buyer. OUIAs (drunken driving arrests) are up statewide."

The participating establishments will have a plain clothes police officer in the store to make sure the customers are of legal age. The stores will also have signs warning patrons that police may be posing as store employees.

In addition to the officers in the stores, a uniformed officer will be in an unmarked car nearby to apprehend any adult who buys alcohol for underage drinkers.

"This is a new concept," Dwyer said. "It's geared toward cooperation between the store owner, the police and the public."

The program will be totally paid for with \$10,000 of federal grant money administered by the state. The overtime, posters and other costs will not require any match from the city.

Debbie Savage, alcohol program coordinator for the Michigan State Police, said Mount

Pleasant is the only other community in the state to have initiated the program.

"What we like is that it gets the community involved," she said. "You have the court, the licensed establishments and the people all involved."

Dwyer said the department's sting operations of the past 10 years, which were publicized ahead of time, wound up with a low of zero and a high of 76 percent of the establishments in violation.

"The licensees frequently feel they are the main target of liquor enforcement and applaud the opportunity to discourage and charge minors and adults who frequently jeopardize their reputation and liquor licenses," Dwyer said.

Adults who furnish alcohol to minors or minors who illegally buy or use false identification can be charged with misdemeanors and fined up to \$500.

Two recent deaths have been attributed to drunken drivers in Farmington Hills.

In September of 1995, a 13-year-old boy was killed while riding his bike along 10 Mile. The driver was convicted of manslaughter and drunken driving resulting in a fatality. On May 6, a Colorado woman was killed while riding her bike on Freedom road. The driver faces charges of drunken driving resulting in a fatality.

"Nationally, drunken driving accounts for about 56 percent of traffic fatalities," said Hills Traffic Division Supervisor Sgt. Dennis Green. "That goes up to about 80 percent at night."

A sure sign of warm weather.



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LIVONIA Y

METEORS

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Location: Bloomfield Park on 7 Mile between Newburgh and Farmington Roads. Tryout fields are numbers 4, 5, and 6 at the North (back) side of the Park.

Boys:

	Birthdates	Date	Time	Coach	Phone
U10	August 1, 1990 thru July 31, 1997	June 15	2:00 pm	Larry Savatelli	313/421-6973
U11	August 1, 1985 thru July 31, 1996	June 17	6:00 pm	James Michael	313/421-7277
U12	August 1, 1984 thru July 31, 1995	June 18	6:00 pm	Randy Lowe	313/422-4243
U13	August 1, 1983 thru July 31, 1984	June 19	6:00 pm	John Come	313/455-6543
U14	August 1, 1982 thru July 31, 1983	June 19	6:00 pm	John Findling	810/478-4596
U15	August 1, 1981 thru July 31, 1982	June 25	6:00 pm	Edd Broderick	810/464-3616
U16	August 1, 1980 thru July 31, 1981	June 25	6:00 pm	Peggy Viedovich	810/474-2143

Girls:

	Birthdates	Date	Time	Coach	Phone
U11	August 1, 1985 thru July 31, 1986	June 20	6:00 pm	Ernie Liebold	313/454-8607
U12	August 1, 1984 thru July 31, 1985	June 20	6:00 pm	Evelyn Lewis	313/427-4082
U13	August 1, 1983 thru July 31, 1984	June 17	6:00 pm	John Peterson	313/422-1476
U14	August 1, 1981 thru July 31, 1982	June 18	6:00 pm	Bob Westfall	313/422-4851
U15	August 1, 1980 thru July 31, 1981	June 18	6:00 pm	Mike McMahon	313/423-8169
U17	August 1, 1979 thru July 31, 1980	June 18	6:00 pm	Mike Poulos	313/474-0811

All players must wear shin guards covered by socks. Bring water, and inflated soccer ball clearly identified with player's name.