

Hills city council pedals new bicycle helmet ordinance

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Heads up: Farmington Hills is considering a bicycle helmet ordinance for kids under 16.

Those caught riding without headgear will receive a warning for the first offense. A second offense will result in a \$5 fine, which will be dismissed if the offender buys a helmet within 10 days.

Such a law isn't designed to punish but to bring awareness, Farmington Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer said.

On Monday, Dwyer met with Farmington Hills City Council members during a study session. The city council will formally consider the measure at a meeting in May.

"It certainly isn't real punitive; it's a step in the right direction," said Councilman Jerry Ellis. "But it's going to go nowhere if there isn't the educational component."

Adrian has a bike helmet

ordinance, which has resulted in more kids wearing headgear without a lot of tickets being written, Dwyer said.

In May, Hills police will start offering bike helmets to those who don't have them. The program is being funded through drug forfeiture money.

"Our position is to give them a lot of latitude," the police chief said. "We're not going to be tough guys out there."

Not all council members are sold, though. Councilwoman Cheryl Oliverio doesn't think an ordinance will make kids wear helmets.

"A lot of the kids have these helmets," Oliverio said. "It's getting them on their heads."

Oliverio's colleague agreed.

"I can hear parents in the community saying, 'Don't your police officers have anything better to do than give my 8-year-old a ticket?'" Councilwoman Judy Soronen said.

The fact there is a law will make many kids comply, Councilwoman Vicki Barnett said. She wants the ordinance to include skateboarders and in-line skaters.

"They're really getting severely injured," Barnett said.

Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi likened a bike helmet ordinance to the state's current seat belt law, which results in tickets being issued as a secondary infraction. Awareness, though, has made many motorists buckle up, Vagnozzi said.

If it's approved, the council will review the law after a year, which may include increasing the age beyond 16.

Barnett asked what police will do if they encounter a mother and father without helmets riding with their children. "Do they get off seat free?" Barnett asked.

Teens nabbed for stealing car

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If there's a thieves' manual, chances are it includes a passage about not stealing from a place where there are 40 police officers representing 27 law enforcement agencies nearby.

Two car burglars apparently didn't glean that bit of text. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been listening to police reading them their rights later.

On Monday, Sgt. Patrick Jones of the Ferndale Police Department was leaving for lunch when he saw two males breaking into a 1998 Dodge Durango parked in the William Costick Activities Center on 11 Mile Road.

Jones is attending the Northwestern University Institute's School of Police and Staff Command at the center.

After an alarm went off, the pair fled. Jones called Farmington Hills police on his cellular phone while keeping both in view as they sped off in a 1989 Camaro.

Hills police picked up the suspect car going east

on Nine Mile. Officers took two Southfield teens, ages 16 and 17, into custody on Nine Mile and Hunter's Lane, near Telegraph.

Evidence technicians found two screwdrivers in the Camaro.

The 17-year-old is expected to be charged with attempted theft and burglary from a car. The 15-year-old, a minor, was turned over to his mother pending a petition from Oakland County Family Court.

Thieves pried the front passenger door lock and broke a small passenger side window on the Durango, which is owned by a Canton Township woman. Damage is estimated at \$400.

In addition to the benefits officers receive from training, hosting Northwestern University's training program "also increases the potential of arrests like this being made," Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer said.

The school still has eight more sessions planned once a month.

"We'll let the thieves guess which weeks they are," Dwyer said.

MILITARY NEWS

AIR FORCE GRAD
Air Force Grad Jared Roth has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

During the six weeks of training, Roth studied the Air Force mission, organization, and customs and received special training in human relations.

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn credit toward an associate's degree through the community college of the Air Force.

Roth is the son of Steven and Susan Roth of Farmington Hills. He is a 1997 graduate of Harrison High School.

NEW GRAD ENLISTS
Kathleen Beaudrie, daughter of Matilda and John Beaudrie of Farmington Hills, enlisted in the Air Force's Delayed Entry Program March 30.

Beaudrie, a January 1999 graduate of Farmington High School, is scheduled for enlistment in the regular Air Force on April 28. Upon graduation from the Air Force's six-week basic training course in San Antonio, Texas, she is scheduled to receive technical training as a security forces apprentice. She will also earn credits toward college.



Jared Roth

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