

Commerce *from page A1*

Tucson, Ariz.
DDA members intend to meet with merchants over the next 30 days, to discuss the plan and determine who might be interested in participating.

Help for merchants

According to a proposal made Tuesday by Baker and Jody Soronen of MCC, merchants would pay a fee of \$200 monthly to take part in the service.

But, to launch the program, the DDA will offer subsidies of \$50 per month (\$600 for the full year) to the first 10 merchants who sign on, leaving a monthly balance of \$150. If the program catches on, another 10 merchants would have a chance for subsidies in 2001, said Judy Downey, executive director of the DDA.

"The idea behind the e-commerce marketing program is to offer financial assistance to DDA merchants, so they can be progressive in marketing their products and businesses in the new century," Downey emphasized, following the DDA meeting at Farmington City Hall. "And billions of dollars are being spent on the Internet."

Although the start-up cost might be too big of a financial hit for some smaller merchants, Downey added that the amount for a merchant to sign up "is less than it would be to pay one part-timer."

Both Downey and Baker said it makes sense for businesses to take a close look at e-commerce, for no other reason than the fact Internet sales in 2000 are projected at \$10 billion (up from

\$6.1 billion in 1999). On-line shopping also was popular during the just-concluded holiday season, Baker said.

"With catalogues, and malls, your piece of the pie keeps getting smaller when you're a downtown merchant," Downey noted. E-commerce is a way for those businesses to combat that trend.

Connected

Besides giving merchants a unique chance to promote their businesses, Baker said the Internet now provides a reliable vehicle for customers from the Farmington area - and well beyond - to sneak a glimpse at local businesses and their products.

"The reality is a certain percentage of people buy on the Internet," Baker said. "And merchants lose out on that if they're not connected."

Convenience for businesses, and shoppers, many of them senior citizens, also is a factor. To that end, the site will feature a wide array of services, including: a store main page; customer service page; catalog pages for up to 200 items; shopping cart; secure file server; and a listing on the site for all DDA members.

At least one downtown business owner intends to take advantage of the opportunity. "I think it's great," said Linda Trczinski, owner of Farmington Center Florist and a member of the DDA. "It's 2000, it's the new millennium. ... It has a chance to work here. In fact, I have people who call me all the time and ask if they can order on-line. It's the wave of the future."

Downey said it is likely that other cities with downtown districts, such as Plymouth and

Northville, for instance, will be watching what transpires with the Farmington program.

On the map

The new plan follows two years of research on the subject by Marketing Communications Counsel, with Baker recently making a presentation to the state DDA (which Downey oversees).

Baker, meanwhile, emphasized that the Downtown Farmington MarketPlace will require good old-fashioned, traditional publicity and promotions for it to really succeed. In its proposal to the DDA, the communications management firm stated that it would "create a marketing program for the site targeting merchants and the public."

Downey said Farmington's

many specialty shops stand to gain from signing on to the program.

"I see this as a tremendous avenue of possibility," Downey said, "for the thousands of people out there to find out what our specialty shops have, like the Candy Boutique, the Celtic Shamrock and Bead Bohemia."

Businesses such as the Cigar Emporium could "go global," interjected Baker. And, Books Abound already is using the Internet to spur business, selling used and rare books worldwide.

That Farmington would become a leader in e-commerce didn't surprise MCC's Soronen, noting that the city of Farmington (in 1997) was the first Michigan municipality to develop an official Web site.

Babies *from page A1*

Barbara started complaining about feeling sick to her stomach. "We left immediately."

Mike still intended on being available Saturday to assist any Y2K-related emergencies for the Farmington Hills Fire Department, where he is a paid callback reserve firefighter. Crawford also is a volunteer reservist for the city of Farmington.

"The next morning, contractions started about five o'clock. She (Barbara) called the doctor and she told her to come in," he

About five hours later, their baby was born with "no problems," said the proud father.

Kirsten is believed to be the first baby of the new millennium born to Farmington or Farmington Hills families.

Baby boy welcomed

At Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills, the first baby of the 21st century wasn't born until 4:46 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 2, said spokeswoman Nancy Dumas.

De Maree Dean, 8 pounds, 6 ounces, was born to Detroit's Denitha Dean. The little boy was welcomed with a gift basket overflowing with donations from the Farmington-Farmington Hills communities. He also received a T-shirt with the slogan, "I'm a Botsford Millennium Baby."

The first 25 babies to be born at Botsford in 2000 will receive the T-shirts.

Crash *from page A1*

Livonia Police Department spokesman Lt. Ben McDermott agreed Livonia's officers followed the department's chase policy.

A Hills officer spotted the car on southbound Middlebelt near Grand River about five minutes after it was reported stolen. Griffin eluded the officer and Livonia officers when they tried to pull over the car as the officers approached Seven Mile.

Griffin sped off, south on Midalebelt, when officers turned on their overhead emergency lights. Griffin's speed may have exceeded 70 mph.

In-car police video tapes showed that officers in patrol cars from Farmington Hills and Livonia followed departmental pursuit guidelines, Dwyer said.

Dwyer didn't characterize the chase as a "high-speed" pursuit, saying officers maintained a rate of under 55 mph while traveling

in the 40-mph zone on Middle
belt

"You can see it very clearly on the video tape," he said. "He accelerated and left us in the dust."

Griffin crashed the Thunderbird into a light pole apparently while trying to turn left onto Six Mile. He was taken by ambulance to Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills, where he was pronounced dead.

A .38-caliber pistol was found. Dwyer said, as far as his department is concerned, the case is closed.

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