

Tape: Farmington police are looking for the men shown in this surveillance tape at a Redford Township party store.

Robbery from page A1

ence. "The photo is a still photo of a surveillance video in Redford of them cashing lottery tickets."

Police reports described the three suspects as short-haired black males, ages 30-35. Two are 5-foot, 4-inches tall with the third 5-foot, 9-inches tall. They weigh 140-160 pounds.

The armed robbery took place about 8 p.m. when three suspects victimized the clerk, a 30-year-old Farmington Hills man, Herrmann said.

According to police reports, two men entered Grand Orchard Party Store shortly before 8 p.m., with one inquiring about lottery tickets. Subsequently, they walked over to separate wall coolers and brought single cans of beer and pop back to the counter, where they purchased their beverages and had them placed into small brown paper bags.

Two of the men then allegedly took out nickel-plated semi-automatic handguns from under their coats, pointed them at the clerk and ordered him to go to a back room.

While the clerk was being taken to the back room, he told police a third man entered the store, also pointing a handgun at him, reports continued.

The victim was tied up in the back room with an extension cord, although he was able to free himself as soon as he heard the suspects leave the store, Herrmann said.

About \$140 in cash was taken from the lottery machine, with money also taken from the main cash register and under the counter near the register.

"They were pretty proficient,"

FARMINGTON

said Herrmann about the suspects.

Herrmann, however, said he wasn't sure "at this juncture whether they've been involved in other convenience store robberies."

Anyone with information about the case is asked to call the Farmington Public Safety Department at (248) 477-4700, ext. 240.

Fest from page A1

Their questions, discussed by FAFB board members during Friday morning's meeting, include:

■ Why was the fee not charged in previous years?

■ Is the money for a general participation fee or for specific expenses?

■ Is the Farmington Area Family Fest intended to be a profit-making venture?

■ What are this year's rates for participating in the festival's Founder's Day Parade?

The new look revolves around a restructuring of the event that began in late 1998 and early 1999. Those changes centered on the festival becoming financially self-sustaining and more of a regional draw, and not needing to be managed by the Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce.

"The festival is not the festival of old," said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauffoff. "It won't be operating, it can't be operating the way it used to ... because there's nobody to pay for it. It's got to be self-supporting."

Two other questions not on their list but which could have been, are what prompted the change in name and month. This year, the festival will be called the "Farmington Area Family Fest," and be held June 22-24, rather than in July.

The move to June, explained Lauffoff at the time of that change, was to minimize direct competition with other similar events and to hold it prior to the July 4 holiday weekend. As it is, Farmington's event will coincide with the Livonia Spree.

Protection

Lauffoff and other board mem-

bers maintain that merchants had an opportunity all along to participate in the ongoing changes to the festival. But they readily agree that a better job could have been done about communicating matters, such as a city ordinance for special events approved in 1999.

The ordinance states that a fee can be charged merchants to display merchandise for special events, such as the festival. The fee will help pay for insurance coverage, to protect the city against a trip-and-fall lawsuit, for example.

It also will defray costs for marketing and promoting the event, said Carloigh Flaherty, FAFB board secretary and president of the Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce. The chamber formerly managed the founder's festival until it was turned over in early 1999 to Watts-UP Inc.

But Clothes Encounters' owner Larry Sallen already spends several hundred dollars each year to send out 2,100 postcards about the festival, said Stacy Wallace, manager of the contemporary ladies boutique.

"He pays taxes, he pays rent, he's been here 13 years," Wallace said about Sallen and his Grand River store. "He brings Farmington a tremendous amount of business. Every year, people come from all over for Founder's Festival to come to our store. ... They should be paying us \$50."

Efforts to smooth over communication snags are already under way, said Flaherty, noting that the merchants' list of questions will be answered in writing "by the beginning of next week."

Talking about change

Flaherty said a "town hall" meeting in late March at the Farmington Training Center will give residents another chance to become informed about anything they want to know about the festival.

She agreed that, in retrospect, such a meeting should have been held previously. "We can all agree that, from an educational standpoint, we could have made some improvements in that regard."

Concurring was Lauffoff, who said a lot of the problem is due to anxiety over change.

"It's obvious to all members of the board that, geez, we need to get the information out so they can understand what's going on," Lauffoff said Friday afternoon. "Once the right information gets out, at least then there'll be a thorough understanding. And we're hopeful they'll all want to participate in their community."

Despite the unhappiness from merchants over the fee, with some of them signing a petition to not pay it, Lauffoff insisted that they had an opportunity early on to be heard.

"At the beginning, a committee of 30 people was formed," Lauffoff said, referring to the 1998-99 restructuring of the festival. "We actually solicited people to be part of it. ... So there were efforts made, major efforts made. We wish more people from the downtown area had wanted to be involved. That may have helped a little bit."

Lauffoff said the resurrection of the dormant Downtown Farmington Business Association will be a plus for the city. "Certainly,

it's an asset to the downtown, and to the entire community, to have a strong business association that can participate."

The city manager said he doesn't view the re-formation as a slam against the job being done by the chamber of commerce or Farmington Downtown Development Authority.

Banding together

"If the catalyst for them getting back together is the festival, I think that's good," Lauffoff said. "Anything that can bring the business people together will ultimately be real positive."

The merchants' group held a meeting last week, hosted by Books Around co-owners Skip Rosenthal and Alice McCoy. Rosenthal said between 20-25 businesses participated.

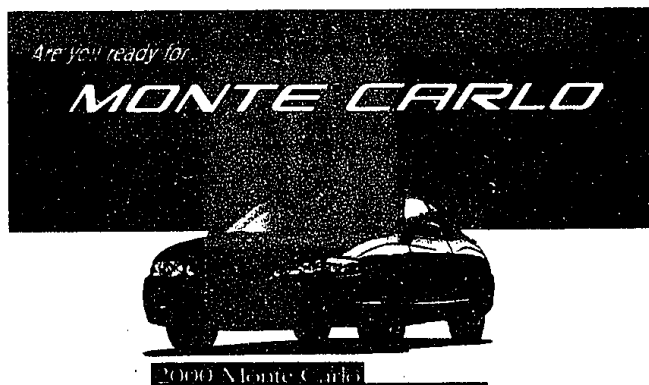
"We feel we should be more involved" with the festival's planning, Rosenthal said. "There are things happening that we were not informed about. We're sure it was unintentional. It was a lack of communication."

Tom Petros, owner of the Cigar and Wine Emporium businesses in the Downtown Farmington Center, said the merchants are "all in this together," and that the fee caught them by surprise.

Flaherty doesn't think the festival would cease to exist if the \$50 fee were not paid.

But it "sends a message that we all buy into the concept that bringing a festival to the area is not just about bringing people downtown over the course of three days. But it's (about) broadening the exposure out there, in the areas surrounding Farmington and Farmington Hills," she said.

Test Drive A Monte Carlo And Have A Ball.



Test drive the new 2000 Monte Carlo* and receive by mail a special edition Team Monte Carlo/NCAA® Final Four® basketball. (Retail value \$19.95) And while you're there, register for a chance to win two tickets to the 2000 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball championship game!

Hurry! Offer ends February 25.

CHEVROLET



WE'LL BE THERE™

See Your Chevrolet® Dealer Today!

*For basketball offer: Test drive the 2000 Monte Carlo between 1/31/00 and 2/25/00. Must present valid driver's license. Test drive required. Entry form to qualify for the basketball and ticket giveaway must be postmarked by 2/28/00. Offer limited to one special edition Team Monte Carlo/NCAA® Final Four® basketball per household, while supplies last. Only original entry form accepted. Reproductions or facsimiles are not valid. Entry form must be validated by sales representative and all information must be complete. Please allow approximately 60-90 days for receipt of premium.

†For ticket giveaway: No purchase or test drive necessary. Official entry forms and rules are available at all participating IN, MI, MN and OH Chevy dealers. For alternate means of entry, call 1-800-501-0747. Ticket giveaway open only to licensed drivers, 18 or older, who are residents of IN, MI, MN or OH. Ticket giveaway ends 2/25/00. Subject to all applicable laws and regulations. Void wherever prohibited by law.

The Monte Carlo Emblem is a trademark of the GM Corp. ©2000 GM Corp. Buckle up, America! 1-800-950-2438 or www.chevrolet.com

THINKING ABOUT
A NEW
FURNACE
INNOX
FREE ESTIMATES
(734) 525-1930
UNITED HEATING & AIR
8919 MIDDLEBURY • LIVONIA

**PRETTY TILE.
UGLY GROUT?**
(THE STUFF BETWEEN THE TILES)
Tired of moldy, missing,
dirty, cracked grout? We
clean, seal, repair, regrout
& stain/change color!
FREE ESTIMATES
The Grout Doctor
248-358-7383

Dolls & Bears
10-60% OFF
ALEXANDER'S FURNITURE
CORP. 15000 W. 15TH AVE. SUITE 100
LIVONIA, MI 48150-1500
CALL 248-358-7383