

# Thefts from page A1

puters were stolen from the Federated Capital Corp. building, 30965 Northwestern.

Dwyer said approximately \$80,000 worth of electronic equipment has been stolen in the latest string of burglaries. Reported stolen so far were 17 desktop computers, seven laptop computers, two Palm Pilots, two printers and two servers.

A similar burglary problem took place in late last summer. A suspect, Melvin Matsey of Detroit, was arrested Sept. 27, 2000 in Farmington Hills by the South Oakland Narcotics Intelli-

gence Consortium (SONIC, which includes the Farmington Hills Police Department).

Hills Sgt. Charles Hubbard said Matsey was charged with breaking and entering a building with intent, a 10-year felony, and remains in the Oakland County Jail. Matsey's trial is tentatively scheduled to begin in May, before Oakland Circuit Judge Nancy Grant.

Dwyer believes the 25-year-old Matsey probably was responsible for 35 commercial burglaries. The police chief estimated that the total amount of laptop com-

puters stolen just from Farmington Hills during that spree was more than \$100,000. Reward money will be taken out of the Hills department's drug forfeiture fund.

"These burglaries, in most cases, come from people who are addicted to drugs," Dwyer added.

Southfield and Franklin apparently are experiencing similar burglaries, Dwyer said, "and they're probably all connected."

Dwyer said business owners should be mindful of the following crime prevention tips:

- keep laptop computers out of sight;
- keep outside lights on;
- keep interior lights on and blinds open so intruders can be seen;
- report all suspicious persons and activities to police;
- keep floppy discs with important and personal information in a secure place.

Anyone with information about the break-ins should contact the Hills police department at (248) 473-9600.

# Batch from page A1

ted, the batch plant would need to be compatible with existing land use and surrounded by vacant area. But the property is in close proximity to Meadow Ridge Condominiums, Timber Creek Apartments and Kimberly Hills subdivision, noted former Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi.

During a public hearing, several residents said they thought the company needed to take a harder look at putting up the batch plant on unused parking space at Oakland Community College-Orchard Ridge campus.

Liddell, however, said efforts to connect with OCC had not been successful. But commis-

sioners still weren't satisfied that the proponent's company fulfilled its obligation of making a complete study of available options.

"I don't know why you haven't gotten an answer from OCC," said Meadow Ridge resident Nancy Barnes, turning toward Liddell, who was seated in the audience at Farmington Hills City Hall. "Maybe you should try again."

Safety and health issues were of primary concern to residents such as Michelle Solomon. She wondered how a stream of cement trucks and other construction vehicles would hinder getting into and out of driveways and residential streets, let alone emergency vehicle access.

Another issue brought up during the hearing was the fact trucks would need to turn left out of the batch plant, then go up a slight hill on the way toward 11 Mile, where they would turn west toward the construction site. That could be a precursor to serious accidents, where other motorists might slam into the rear of slow-to-gain-speed trucks.

## Voices were heard

"That was democracy in action," said Kimberly Hills subdivision resident Elaine Fitzpatrick, among citizens happy with the decision.

While leaving the meeting, Liddell declined comment about the decision - and about what the company might do next.

Tony Angelo Cement Construction will now need to explore bringing in the cement from another mixing plant outside of Farmington Hills, which would not be as efficient or cost-effective, Liddell explained during the meeting.

Vagnozzi said the Angelo company "has a good reputation, but they didn't do their homework on this one."

He added that perhaps Angelo might do well by teaming up with the city to approach OCC, to use parking lot space for the batch plant location. City approval would not be required to put the plant there.

That option makes sense to Fitzpatrick, noting that the rear college lot "is virtually empty, even during the school year."

## State extends deadline for special ed comments

Superintendent of Public Instruction Arthur Ellis has announced that the public comment period for the state's proposed changes to special education services in Michigan will be extended to May 16.

"Although I believe that the original time period for public comment was adequate, the new time line will leave no doubt that people had the opportunity to voice their concerns," Ellis said. "Providing four more public hearings - two in Big Rapids and two in Oakland County - will give additional exposure to the proposed special education rules."

Tom Watkins, who will assume the position of Superintendent of Public Instruction on April 30, 2001, said he "is very pleased that the department is making a good faith effort to reach all of the affected parties by extending the period for public comment."

The original deadline for public comment - April 16 - was put in place to allow for the enactment of new rules and to comply with federal law. Implementation of the new rules by fall 2002 will require schools to plan thoughtfully and work closely with all interested parties throughout the 2001-2001 school year, Ellis noted.

On April 12, the State Board of Education recommended to Ellis that the deadline for public comment be extended to June 16. Ellis took all of the public comment received by the Michigan Department of Education, along with the board's recommendation, into consideration when he made the May 16 deadline extension decision.

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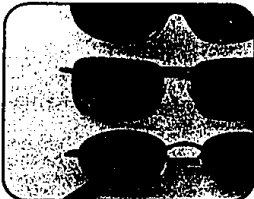
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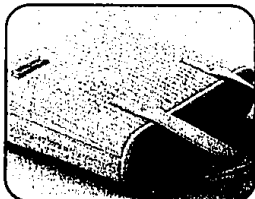
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