



Farmington and Farmington Hills city officials and chamber of commerce members joined the staff and owners of Midfield Grill for a ribbon cutting and grand opening celebration Tuesday.

Midfield Grill opens, specializing in beef

Midfield Grill, located on Grand River between Orchard Lake and Middlebelt, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its grand opening Tuesday.

Officials from the Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce and Farmington Hills attended the event where guests enjoyed a dinner after the ceremony.

Manager Butch Beslach said about 50 people helped welcome the new business at 30555 Grand River.

Midfield Grill, at 10,000 square feet, has two full bars and 29 televisions.

The grill serves a full menu, but specializes in beef entrees, Beslach said.

The lounge area offers three Playstation II video game systems, and a large game room contains pool tables, darts, foosball and bubble hockey.

Live entertainment plays every Friday and Saturday nights, the manager said.

"The music can range from classic rock to blues to jazz," he said.

Midfield Grill is open noon to midnight Sunday; 11 a.m.-midnight Monday through Wednesday; 11 a.m.-2 a.m. Thursday and Friday; and 4 p.m.-2 a.m. Saturday.

Call (248) 442-1000 for information.

Traffic stop takes frightening turn

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

A simple traffic stop turned into a life-threatening prospect for three Farmington Hills officers recently on Eight Mile Road.

New officer Domenic Lauria was on patrol, being trained by veteran officer Shelly Turner, when Lauria pulled over a vehicle along Eight Mile during a recent early morning rush hour.

When the man gave Lauria different identifications, he asked the man to step out while traffic whizzed by in three outside lanes.

Luckily, while approaching the man's parked vehicle on the passenger side, Turner noticed something metal appeared to be sticking out of the suspect's right-side pocket — something only she could see.

"I knew something wasn't right," Turner said. "It could have been a flashlight or a gun."

While the suspect was being patted down for weapons, he surprisingly leaped into moving traffic along Eight Mile near Inksater.

Officers who are in the area where a traffic stop is made are encouraged to serve as backup, Police Chief William Dwyer said.

In this case, the backup was veteran officer William Maffesoli, who ran after the 6-foot, 250-pound man. Maffesoli tackled the suspect in the next lane where, just seconds before, traffic was passing.

Lauria and Turner followed. After a struggle, a loaded handgun was confiscated and the man was restrained.

More alarming was the discovery that Plymouth and Detroit police are expected to charge the man with recent armed robberies in each of those communities.

The police car's video surveillance camera captured the incident while cars swerved away from the officers and suspect as they struggled.

"We were very lucky that nobody was seriously injured with those cars," Turner said.

Lauria said if Maffesoli hadn't been there for backup, the situation could have been far worse.

Maffesoli said the situation is typical of what officers face everyday on the job, where "you could be drinking a cup of coffee and the next minute you're fighting for your life."

Lauria, a former cadet, became an officer with the department on Dec. 12 last year. He said he witnessed a police video that shows a young officer being fatally shot by a motorist in Georgia. The lone officer was afforded no backup.

The tape serves as a chilling warning to future officers that even simple traffic stops can lead to deadly confrontations.

Maffesoli said having enough manpower is the key to keeping officers safe.

Dwyer said when people see two police cars handling a traffic stop, a situation like the recent struggle on Eight Mile is the reason.

"Nothing is routine, even in traffic stops," the chief said.

More than 100 attend hearing on bottle deposit law

BY KURT RUBAN
STAFF WRITER

A group of state legislators heard the pros and cons of expanding the state's bottle deposit law at a public hearing Monday attended by more than 100 people at Oakland University.

The meeting was sponsored by the Michigan Beverage Container and Recycling Task Force, a Senate committee which is reviewing the state's beverage container deposit law, better known as the Bottle Bill.

Michigan voters approved the law, which put a 10-cent deposit on soda and beer containers, in 1976 to help curb litter.

However, the law does not cover the containers of non-carbonated drinks, including water and juice, which have seen a tremendous jump in sales in recent years.

The task force heard from many people who want to see the law expanded to cover those containers. However, many bottlers and retailers also showed up, hoping to kill such an expansion.

"It's amazing there's such a wide-ranging interest in this topic," said task force chairman Sen. Cameron Brown, a Republican from Allegan County.

Monday's hearing was just the second of nine the task force has scheduled around the state. Brown said after the hearings are completed, the task force will make a recommendation about expanding the bottle bill to the state Legislature. The next meeting is March 31 in Coldwater.

Those opposing an expansion said it would be too difficult to implement and too expensive.

Brandon George, co-owner of the Red Wagon Shop in Rochester, called the proposed expansion "an unfunded government mandate." He said mom-and-pop shops like his don't have the space to accept all the returned containers that would result if there were an expansion.

"The current proposed expansion is scary," he said. "It will not only increase labor costs, but also space costs. And we don't make a red cent from bottle returns. Space is really our big issue. Where are we going to put these things?"

Those in favor of expanding the law were just as adamant. Clarkston resident John Bradford, a truck driver, said there should be an expansion to cover all bottles and containers for single-use products.

"I've traveled all over this country, to places like Florida that don't have bottle returns, and I've seen bottles and cans all over the roadway. So I think our law works pretty well," he said. "Here in Michigan, water bottles are just everywhere. I think the expansion should include all the containers that can be taken on the road and thrown out the window."

Sam Washington, the executive director of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, said the more than 500 clubs represented by his group are supporting an expansion, which will include all water and juice bottles.

MUCC members gathered petition signatures back in 1976 to get the original bottle bill on the ballot and, according to Washington, would do so again if state lawmakers don't pass an expansion.

"At the time of the original bill, the state Legislature was very reluctant to do anything about the problem and left it to the people. The arguments back then are the same as the ones we're hearing now against the expansion," he said.

"The people of Michigan are ready for a revision to the bottle bill that will be more inclusive to current containers. If the Legislature can't find a way to do it, the people, as usual, will find a way to do it themselves."

Sen. Mike Bishop (R-Rochester), a member of the task force, said the group has a difficult task ahead, and will attempt to find the best solution to the problem.

Apply for Founders Fest arts, craft show

Applicants are being sought for the juried Arts and Crafts area of the 2003 Farmington Area Founders Festival to be held July 17-19 in downtown Farmington.

The exhibit features artists and crafters from around the country, bringing fine hand-made items. Applications represent all types of arts and crafts including painting, sculpture, pottery, jewelry, textiles, needlework, photography, glass and stained glass, leather, graphics and woodcarving.

More than 150 fine arts and craft exhibitors will be on display for the July Festival which attracted nearly 150,000 visitors last year.

Applications may be downloaded on-line at www.foundersfestival.com (crafters) or by contacting the FAFF hotline at (248) 932-FEST.

More than 150 fine arts and craft exhibitors will be on display for the July Festival which attracted nearly 150,000 visitors last year.

Questions can be e-mailed to info@foundersfestival.com. The deadline for applications is April 30.

The Farmington Area Founders Festival features juried craft and fine art exhibits, live entertainment, children's activities, a Saturday morning parade, a wide variety of food vendors and the Founders Cafe and On Road.

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