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Burglaries top the list in city crime

Arson, robbery, burglary, aggravated assault and auto theft were the crimes showing the most significant increases on the city of Farmington crime blotter for 1981, according to a recently released public safety report.

The value of goods taken in burglaries increased by 27.3 percent, according to the report presented by Lt. Frank Lauboff at Monday's council session.

Burglaries reached a record high of 163 in 1981, surpassing the previous high of 147 set in 1975. In 1980, the tally was set at 125, according to the report.

A burglary breakdown showed that 124 were residential, including apartments and condominiums. Thirty-nine others were at commercial or business establishments.

Precious metals such as coins, silver and flatware accounted for much of the burglary increase over the previous year, according to the report.

"The residential burglary increases have been a nearly universal experience," said the report, authored by Public Safety Director Robert Seifert.

Apprehending suspects is difficult, he says, because it's tough for a patrol officer to stumble upon a break-in while on patrol. The problem is compounded by the difficulty in identifying someone as suspicious because thieves are often friends or neighbors of the victims.

HOWEVER, SEIFERT adds, the enactment of the Precious Metals Act last fall reduced burglaries in the last half of 1981 and into this year.

The act requires coin and metal dealers to take steps to identify the seller and record transactions.

Goods worth \$26,097 were taken in 1981 as compared to a 1980 total of \$7,939, an increase of 303 percent over the total worth of goods stolen in 1980 robberies.

"The dramatic increase in the value of property taken is attributed to a single robbery of a local coin shop from which \$18,400 was taken," said the report.

That shop was Farmington Assay.

"The assailant in the coin shop robbery was apprehended and subsequently convicted, receiving a prison term in excess of 20 years, but the property was recovered."

Eight robberies were reported to Farmington Police in 1981 compared to six the previous year and an average of 6.1 robberies a year in the past 10 years.

Thirty-five motor vehicles were stolen in Farmington during 1981, compared to 30 the year before. A sign of the economic times is reflected in the fact that despite more cars being stolen, the average value of the cars in 1981 was \$4,343 compared to an average of \$8,609 in 1980.

EIGHT INSTANCES of arson were detected by public safety officials in 1981 compared to five such incidents the preceding year. The largest arson property loss was the Glass Onion restaurant which suffered a \$214,000. The investigation into that blaze "is currently being held open pending any additional investigative leads," said the report.

The department reported 144 fire runs in 1982 as compared to 109 in 1980 for a 32.1 percent increase.

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Customers line up to take advantage of a three-hour gas sale at a Shell station on Grand River and Power in Farmington. The manager of the station says the sale may be repeated again next week.

'It's a gas'

Regular gas dips below \$1

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

For the first time in almost three years, gasoline prices dipped below the \$1 per gallon mark in Farmington Tuesday afternoon.

The Shell station at the corner of Grand River and Power sold regular leaded gasoline for 99 cents and unleaded for \$1.09 during what was billed as "happy hour" from noon till 3 p.m. for self-serve customers who pump their own gas.

Business at the gas station owned by Rick Evenson of Plymouth wasn't as brisk as anticipated because just as the sale started, a city employee made the manager remove a temporary sign

posted in front of the establishment because it violated the city sign law.

The regular price signs, however, were changed to reflect the double-digit special. Station manager Tony Furguele, of Plymouth, hinted that the special may be repeated again next Tuesday afternoon if the public responds favorably.

"It's being done to let new customers know we're here and give our steady customers a break," says Furguele. The owner just took over this station in December and figured this would be a fairer way of passing on a savings than to send out flyers advertising a discount for those who need mechanic work done.

Business hasn't been great at the station, Furguele says, so it is hoped that

the sale will attract new customers to the business.

"IT'S KIND of a come-on, a loss-leader type of thing," he explained.

In retailing, a loss-leader is an item the seller offers at less than the price he paid. Ferguele says the station lost one cent per gallon pumped during the "happy hour" but hopes to make up for it by word-of-mouth advertising and by attracting customers to the station for repair work.

The gas sale attracted a great deal more customers than normal at the gas station but there were no long lines such as the ones found in other cities where the promotion was tried.

"I think it's great," says Pat Murray, 26, of Farmington. "It's just too bad it

won't stay like this. It'll go right back up this summer."

Similar comments were made by Lorrie Urban, 29, of Brighton, who filled up her tank with unleaded.

"By vacation time they'll get it right back up," she says. "When somebody wants money, they do something to get money."

Some older drivers said they never expected to be lining up to purchase gas at a bargain price of \$1.09 after years of paying less than 50 cents a gallon.

Gas reached a modern-day low of 18.9 cents per gallon in the Detroit area in 1968 and hit a high of 145.9 cents per gallon around Christmas 1980, according to gas station owners.

Hartsock wants cable books audited

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

Just as city officials were dotting the last "T" in MetroVision on the cable television company's agreement with Farmington, the accountant serving on the City Council raised a point about reviewing the firm's financial reports.

If MetroVision requests a subscription to increase three years into the 15-year franchise agreement with Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi, Farmington Councilman William Hartsock would like to judge that request

against a certified audit of the firm's financial statements.

Hartsock's request for an audit eventually won the unanimous backing of three councilmen, with Councilman Richard Tupper again absent. But City Manager Robert Deadman chided the council for bringing up the matter at such a late date and delaying the start of cable installation.

The cable television contract agreement language is identical to language in the already-introduced cable television franchise ordinance which was reviewed by Farmington officials April

19. The cable ordinance, however, has only been introduced, not adopted, and can be amended by the three cities to reflect Hartsock's demand for a certified audit.

No cable can be strung on utility poles or laid underground until MetroVision secures the contract with all three cities and the ordinances become published and official.

THE IDEA behind having a cable TV agreement that mirrors the language of the cable TV ordinance is to protect the city in the event that a federal judge may rule in the future that a cable company can't grant a cable company a franchise to operate in its jurisdiction. If that should happen, city officials said, the three cities would have an agreement on which to fall back.

All three city councils — Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi — must agree to the audit provision be-

fore it becomes part of the cable agreement and cable ordinance between the tri-city cable authority and MetroVision.

Henry Harris, president of MetroVision, is attending the national Cable Television Association convention in Las Vegas and was unavailable for comment on the request for an audit in the event of a rate increase request.

The company's local representative, Tom Bjorklund, manager of Reelford Township's MetroVision office, was at Monday's Farmington council meeting and didn't think the request was out of line.

"I'm sure the question of certified auditing would cause no problem with headquarters in Atlanta," Bjorklund said.

When asked whether the books of the Oakland County subsidiary of MetroVi-

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Farmer Jack wins right to relocate in larger store

Farmington City Council has approved a zoning change which will allow a Farmer Jack supermarket to move from downtown Farmington to the southeast corner of Farmington Road and Nine Mile.

The new store isn't expected to open until the fall of 1983 at the earliest.

The store will be 41,600 square feet compared to the existing store's 18,600 square feet. Developers also plan to build 20,800 square feet of comparison shopping retail space — enough for 10 stores — and an unattached 5,000-square-foot restaurant.

Comparison shopping includes such shops as fashion and shoe stores, as opposed to convenience stores such as party stores.

Councilmen at Monday night's council meeting said they were sorry that Borman's Inc., the parent company of Farmer Jack supermarkets, had decided to move its downtown store, but were glad the company had chosen to remain in the city of Farmington

rather than relocate in adjacent Farmington Hills or Livonia.

Developers had initially proposed a much larger center which met with opposition from downtown business and city officials concerned that it would draw traffic away from the city.

After meeting with city officials, Wetherford/Walker Developers presented a scaled-down proposal and dropped plans to include a Perry Drugs and ACO Hardware, two businesses located in the downtown area.

AT A PUBLIC HEARING before the council vote, residents were split on whether the city council should rezone the property.

Bill Dobs said city officials haven't considered the amount of traffic such a center will generate at an already congested intersection.

City Manager Robert Deadman said the developers' plans call for widening Farmington Road from four to six

lanes but Dobs said the trouble will come under the M-102 overpass which can't be widened.

Erika Wonn says she's for the project because it'll keep tax dollars in the city of Farmington.

Pat Hargis said the downtown area is threatened and "the downtown gives us something to call Farmington."

Phyllis Carlson said she's concerned about what will happen with the old Farmer Jack store when the new store opens.

"Please, no discount houses (on the site)," Carlson said. "If shops go in there, put good shops in there."

William Wetherford, one of the developers, said he's not only in business in Farmington, he lives in Farmington, and doesn't want to do anything to harm the city or its business climate.

"We're looking for a group of high-class shops that would be an asset to the community," Wetherford said.

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AMAZING RESPONSE!

V. Mazer wanted to sell a Chrysler motor, so she called the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers to place an ad in the classified section. "I am very pleased with the amazing response. I had an ad running in another paper for a week and received no response at all."

Remember...
One call does it all!



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