

Community Corner

This week's question:
After a jet plane piece fell into a Farmington Hills neighborhood last week, do you have any concerns about flying?

We asked this question at the Mid-Eleven Shopping Center, Middlebelt and 11 Mile, Farmington Hills.



"I just came home Saturday from a flight. It was a big concern, but what are you going to do? You've got to get home."
— Judi Mertz, Farmington Hills



"I think it's pretty scary. I think they need to do something updating security and maintenance. It's just really scary."
— David Calcaterra, Hills businessman



"I was really amazed (at the Friday incident). I think that's negligence, I really do. This shouldn't happen. I am a little more fearful."
— Virginia Blaszczyk, Farmington Hills



"I have safety concerns about flying. I don't fly often, but I plan to fly this week. And I am concerned."
— Henry Morris, formerly of Farmington



"I did fly here. It seems to me airplanes are a lot safer than any other way to travel."
— Mike Luxenberg, visiting Farmington Hills



"I don't have any concerns."
— Joel Kushner, visiting family in Hills

Help urged in crackdown on illegal booze sales

By Casey Hens
staff writer

Farmington public safety officials will continue efforts to educate liquor license holders in the city and have added a new tactic to discourage selling alcohol to minors.

The department wants licensees and their employees to dial 9-1-1 if someone is attempting to purchase alcohol illegally. The emergency phone system is used for all types of "crime in progress" and public safety director Frank Lauhoff believes illegal alcohol purchases in his city qualify.

"A minor attempting to purchase alcohol, a minor using false identification or an adult attempting to purchase alcohol for minors

are all crimes in progress," Lauhoff said. "Through this cooperative effort with these businesses, we hope to further reduce the availability of alcohol to minors."

Detectives will make their annual spring visits to licensees to review the procedures they use, and to assure that minors are not obtaining alcohol from their location. Licensees will also be given slickers and other ways to personally enforce liquor laws.

LAUHOFF PRESENTED his 1990 plans to the city council Monday. Letters explaining the new procedures are being sent to licensees this month with a planned launch in May. Licensees must renew their licenses by April 30 of each year.

Although the city will not object to is-

suance of any licenses this year, City Manager Robert Deadman warned the city will continue to watch carefully.

"We believe council should continue to support an aggressive program for inspection," he said, "and license holders should be aware that the city council will not be timid in recommending nonrenewal of Class C licenses if the situation warrants such action."

In the early 1980s, the city took action against Class C license holder Bootleggers Bar, succeeding in eventually removing the license and effectively shutting down the operation after complaints from neighbors living behind the bar. Lauhoff said since that time, the state Liquor Control Commission has become much more supportive in giving violators heavy fines.

Both Farmington and neighboring Farmington Hills have cracked down on illegal alcohol purchases, especially involving minors, during the 1980s. Since 1986, both cities have conducted liquor sting operations using underage cadets as decoys to check stores and bars.

FARMINGTON'S MOST recent sting operation was conducted last October, when 14, or 54 percent, of the city's licensed businesses sold to the cadet and were ticketed. The city has seven Class C licenses, four package liquor locations and 19 beer and wine licenses.

Of those receiving tickets, two pleaded guilty in Farmington's 47th District Court and were fined, three were taken under advisement for six months and given \$200

fines, and the others pleaded not guilty and are awaiting trial.

Although more than half the licensees failed to operate properly in the recent sting, Lauhoff said that number is down from a sting operation in 1986. "We're pleased there's been an improvement. Reducing it at all is still good."

COUNCIL MEMBERS were pleased with stepped-up efforts by the department, and said they would look for even more progress in the coming year. "I guess, personally, I would like to see them drop down further," said Mayor Shirley Richardson.

"The message we'd like to get across, whether they're 8 or 80, when someone walks in the door, you check their proof," added councilwoman JoAnne Meshane.

DDA eyes better retail mix, merchant involvement

By Casey Hens
staff writer

A Farmington Downtown Development Authority subcommittee is fine-tuning ways to better involve merchants, and to bring a healthier retail store mix to the downtown.

The group met last week, and plans to meet again April 24, to get ideas on how they can package downtown Farmington and sell it to those already here, and others who might locate businesses here. DDA members believe their board has to be a catalyst.

"We just don't want the thing to drop," said DDA board member and downtown businessman Frank Clappison. "We need to figure out how we can get a larger group to buy in. It's going to be the association of landlords who will say, 'We want this (retail) mix.' That's where we've fallen short."

Members also said more door-to-door, personal contact was needed with current businesses.

The downtown marketplace has been an ongoing issue with the DDA board for several years. It came to the forefront at a recent DDA board

meeting, where members decided to make it a priority item on their agenda.

THE NINE-MEMBER DDA board was formed by the Farmington City Council in 1986 to develop a physical, streetscape improvement plan in a specified section, which includes most of the city's central business district.

Now in the midst of its \$1.4 million improvement program, the DDA is also concerned that marketing rejuvenation efforts in the city move forward in light of growing competition both within the city and at its

boarders.

The DDA Promotions Committee has met over the past two years to discuss these marketing issues. The DDA is currently in the middle of a two-year promotions effort with Hermanoff & Associates of Farmington Hills, which has brought people downtown through the recent Downtown Day hot dog promotion and other events.

Now, the DDA wants local businesses to get involved and find ways to draw these visitors into their stores and offices.

DDA executive director Wendy

Strip Sittsamer said the DDA has taken an "incremental approach" to the downtown program, beginning with the streetscape program, adding a promotions element last year, and now looking at the overall marketing picture.

"Two years ago, we weren't even looking at a promotions component," she said. "We haven't taken the aggressive approach of stealing stores from other downtowns."

Maria Fomin of Hermanoff, who delivers a regular downtown newsletter to businesses, said she thinks the DDA effort is starting to pay off.

Clappison said the DDA has only one year to implement a program involving all of downtown, and helping businesses to help themselves. The current Hermanoff project will then be over. That program is financed partially by the DDA, and by several major downtown landlords.

Promotions committee chairman Greg Hubler suggested the group create a sales package, divide the downtown into slices, and have DDA members team up with merchants to talk to others.

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