

Protect yourself against repair scams

Consumer advocate and appliance repair expert Joe Gagnon offers these tips to consumers on finding a reputable appliance repair business and avoiding high repair costs:

Bureau at (248) 644-9100 or www.detroitbbb.org

- Call the store where you bought the appliance. They will give you a name of someone they use.
- Make sure the service invoice has the company name,

address and phone number listed and that you understand what work has been done.

- Pay only with a credit card or check. If the work is unsatisfactory, you get a few days to change the outcome.

Sands from page A1

tices, hidden surveillance cameras were installed in three separate homes to record repair services. In each home, Gagnon disabled three home appliances by creating routine, easy-to-repair maintenance issues.

In the first case, he disabled a refrigerator fan motor by disconnecting a wire. A Sands technician said the fan motor was broken and would require replacement. The consumer was charged \$149 for a new motor plus a \$66 fee for the service call. The retail cost of the fan motor is \$29.50.

In a second case, Gagnon disconnected a drive belt so water could not be pumped from a washing machine. The Sands worker on April 10 said he would have to replace two worn belts and the washer's extraction pump, at a cost of \$229. The retail cost of a belt is around \$2.50; a pump costs about \$35.

In a third case, also on April 10, the firm was called to repair a refrigerator that was warm and running constantly. Gagnon had earlier determined the refrigerator's motor merely needed cleaning. A Sands repair person said that a new motor was needed. The customer was charged \$175 for the motor plus \$66 for a service fee. A condenser motor costs about \$30.

Granholtz on Wednesday said she has filed a Notice of Intended Action against Sands Appliance

under the business name Art Adams Appliance. Gagnon urged support for Michigan Senate Bill 217, the Appliance Repair Act, sponsored by state Sen. Bill Bullard, R-Highland. Passage of the legislation would allow the state to better regulate the appliance repair industry. No action has taken place on the bill since it was introduced in February, then referred to committee.

Bullard said that's because a bill co-sponsor, state Sen. Thaddeus McCotter, R-Livonia, took on a leadership role in the Senate investigation of state Sen. David Jaye, R-Washington Township. "That took up his time for several months. We're going to bring the bill up in committee in late September or early October, and get it passed before the end of the year," Bullard said.

The charges are misdemeanors, each punishable by 93 days in jail and a \$600 fine, or three times the value of the property, whichever is greater.

Sands Appliance Service was operated

By any other name:
Sands Appliance repair vans now bear the name "Fast in Home Appliance Service."



Festival from page A1

artists are still being recruited for this year's exhibit, which will be juried the week before the festival.

"We are adding an opening reception for the artists right before the kick-off ceremony on Thursday to give the public a chance to meet the artists and thank them for their support," she said. "Artwork is the perfect media for people to meet each other."

The September 20 kick-off rally begins at 7 p.m.

Sunday's mini-conference, held from 1:30-5:30 p.m., includes a keynote speech and break-out sessions regarding religious diversity. Farmington and Farmington Hills are home

to places of worship that represent many faiths and cultural heritages. From Adat Shalom synagogue to the Korean New Life Church.

Last year's successful new citizen swearing in ceremony will be repeated Friday, Sept. 21 at 10 a.m., with voter training and registration. The ceremony will be at the stage area featured at the Sunday festival.

Events are free and open to the public; food items can be purchased. Volunteers and sponsors are still needed. For information, call the Festival Help-line, (248) 426-4455. For information about the art exhibit, call (248) 473-1857.

Founders Festival, will depart from the Cossick Center Sunday afternoon.

Blackthorn, an Irish band, Biakuye, a Ghanaian drumming troupe, the Arana Topouzian Ensemble with Armenian and Middle Eastern folk music, Earth Angels dance troupe and Japanese tea ceremony will be among the stage acts featured at the Sunday festival.

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Ticket from page A1

fighting the ticket is as annoying as the ticket itself. He is scheduled for a hearing Sept. 20 in 47th District Court.

"The matter is a traffic ticket, and it's the only complaint we got," Goss said.

Ticket options

When a motorist receives a traffic ticket, the back of a ticket offers options, Goss said. They include admitting responsibility, admitting responsibility with explanation, and asking for an informal hearing.

Wardle said he was leaving the Shell Station at Nine Mile and Farmington on July 26 when he turned right to go south to his home on Meadowlark.

"There was no traffic either way," said Wardle, a district manager for The Detroit News-Paper Agency. "When I reached Tall Oaks, I realized that I was in a construction zone and would have to go over a couple of lanes to be positioned to properly enter my subdivision."

A police officer ahead of him "promptly pounced" on him, Wardle alleges. In his letter, he also called that officer "rude and arrogant."

"I offered an explanation, and he said I should know better since I live in this neighborhood and the construction has been there for three days," Wardle said. "However there are not enough signs along Farmington Road to direct traffic. Furthermore, directions change every day. Yes, I live here, but if the road crews are working in a different place each day, how can I possibly memorize what I am supposed to do?"

Wardle said he works midnights in Brighton and sleeps all day. "I am unaware of the constantly changing construction patterns," he said. "Wednesday evening I attended a class at Wayne State University. Thurs-

day morning at 7:30 when I went to get a newspaper, the entry configuration at Flinders and Farmington was notably different from that of 12 hours earlier."

Rules and procedures

Because Wardle's letter contained complaint about Wardle's version of the officer's conduct, the department initiated an internal investigation.

"The matter will be handled according to rules and procedures," Goss said. He couldn't comment on the case because the investigation wasn't completed. Its completion will determine whether it is a founded or unfounded complaint.

"We do a complete investigation," Goss said. "It is still in the works. We have an open and honest policy."

The Farmington Public Safety Department developed procedures for handling complaints about employee misconduct or department procedures which became effective Sept. 14, 1995. The order was developed with the assistance of the department's command staff and representatives of the officers' association.

The procedures generally follow the International Association of Chiefs of Police model policy and meets all the requirements of the Committee for the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies standards with recommendations from the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, according to Goss.

These procedures provide a fair, open and consistent method of handling complaints from citizens, Goss said.

Few complaints

So far this year, the department received four complaints. One is the complaint under investigation. Of the remaining

three, the officer's conduct was determined proper in two of the matters and the third was ruled "unfounded."

The department investigated 10 incidents during 2000, Goss said. Nine were complaints from citizens regarding officers. Two of these citizen complaints were determined to be unfounded.

The investigation in the remaining seven citizens' complaints found that the officer's conduct was proper in four cases. However, there was improper conduct in three of the complaints.

"Appropriate action was taken in each of the three cases involving improper conduct," Goss said. "The departments' in-car video cameras have proved to be of great assistance when investigating these matters."

Goss reminds people to slow down in construction zone traffic and to watch out for construction workers.

Schools complaint

Wardle also criticized the Farmington Public School District in the same letter. "I live next door to Flinders School and have endured the noise and mess of their construction since last spring," Wardle said. "The grounds around the school have not been maintained. Not only is this an eyesore, but the situation has made my wife quite ill, as she has a severe grass and weed allergy."

Wardle lists no copy sent to Farmington School Superintendent Bob Maxfield.

"We always try to address it (problems)," Maxfield said. "Maxfield had school district architect Ron Aten follow up with Wardle about the time schedule for school construction completion."

"There is a certain amount of mess which goes with construction projects," Maxfield said.

Jaycees plan 'Golden Glory' 55th anniversary celebration, benefit

The deadline to reserve tickets for the Farmington Area Jaycees' 55th Anniversary Celebration, "Golden Glory," a Special Olympics Gala has been extended to noon Aug. 31.

Proceeds will benefit Special Olympics of Oakland County.

The event is Friday, Sept. 14 at Vladimir's, 28125 Grand River in Farmington Hills.

Cost is \$50 per person and includes a family style dinner, open bar and silent auction.

The dress is formal/semi-formal. The event is for those 21 and over.

Make checks payable to FAJ/Golden Glory Gala, P.O. Box 33, Farmington, MI 48332.

For more information, contact Jan Henry at (248) 755-5619. The e-mail is gala@fajc.freemovers.com

Hills council approves money for in-car cameras

BY KEVIN BROWN
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Police patrol car videotapes are valuable in defending officers' actions when necessary and in defending the city against lawsuits, says Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer.

So Dwyer asked for, and was granted by city council on Monday, use of a \$46,000 federal grant to improve eight of the department's 40 in-car cameras.

To meet federal guidelines, the city will match the grant with

\$5,142, from the police department's forfeiture fund.

The first in-car video cameras, mounted near the rear-view mirror and able to rotate 180 degrees, were installed 10 years ago.

"The equipment is aging," the chief told council members.

Some of the money will also be used to pay for digital cameras useful in quickly compiling evidence at crime scene investigations.

By law, the purpose of such grants is to reduce crime and

improve public safety.

Officers are instructed to park cars at a certain angle behind those they pull over, so the camera can get the best view. The cameras run 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

The tapes are also useful to demonstrate the behavior of suspected drunk drivers.

Dwyer said that some who have alleged mistreatment by officers have abandoned their allegations, when they learn that video tapes of an incident were made.

Complaints from page A1

concern or problem regardless of what the complaint entails. It's the chief's responsibility to do that. I've met people at their homes, at their office," he said.

Most complaints lodged against the department are due to traffic stops. "We probably make in the city over 50,000 traffic stops annually. Coupled with the number of violation tickets issued, it's a difficult job to start with. You have that responsibility to enforce the traffic laws, people don't take it easy sometimes," Dwyer said.

Ticket challenged

One person who wasn't happy with the department this year was Greg T. Wert, who was issued a ticket on May 21 as he was driving on Northwestern Highway. He was charged with driving 45 mph in a 40 mph zone.

Wert said that when he went to challenge the ticket before a 47th District Court magistrate, the officer had written "construction zone" on the ticket after Wert left the scene.

In his complaint, Wert wrote, "I have no idea why the officer would motion the court to increase the charges at the beginning of my hearing." He maintains that seeking the increased charge of a construc-

tion zone violation was an attempt to penalize him for challenging the original ticket, as it doubles the fine.

In his written complaint to the department, Wert wrote that it was wrong for the officer to do this, saying by law he is entitled to an "exact copy of charges."

Chief Dwyer, Wert said, "doesn't see anything wrong with it." Wert said the district judge agreed with him and dismissed the speeding in a construction zone charge, while retaining the original charge of speeding 5 mph over the posted limit.

"The officer has always had the right to make additional remarks," Dwyer said, adding officers make notes to be thorough.

Of the judge's ruling, Dwyer said, "We don't always agree; we do the best we can. The officer acted within his scope of authority, he acted professionally."

Council meeting

Wert also complained Monday to city council members at their regular meeting. "Do you consider this to be an ethical practice?" he asked, adding he was charged \$75 for a police video of his traffic stop. "The FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) limits costs and I believe the costs to be excessive," Wert said.

"It's a New Day at Crittenton!"



Lyle Perna
Crittenton Maintenance Technician

"Crittenton's new administration has been very receptive to the employees' concerns, questions and ideas. They have done many things to benefit the staff, which has helped a great deal to improve attitudes and working conditions."

"Crittenton has been my community hospital for many years. I got my first job there when I was 16, had my children there and spent 12 days in intensive care while they saved my life. We are so fortunate to have such an excellent medical facility in our backyard!"



Melinda Conway Callahan
Executive Director
Rochester Community Schools Foundation

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