

Suburban News

FACTOID

The population of Wayne County's decreased by 3.6 percent from 89,281 to 86,105 by July 1, 1996.

— Southeast Michigan Council of

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IN OAKLAND COUNTY

3 customers say restaurant served food with maggots

Spokesman denies claim; steakhouse passes test by health inspectors.

By Douglas Ilka
The Detroit News

Three customers who claim they became sick after seeing maggots on food while dining in an Oakland County restaurant say they plan to sue the Lone Star Steakhouse and Saloon in Farmington Hills.

A spokesman for the restaurant denied maggots were in the food, and an Oakland County Health Department inspection has cleared the steakhouse to remain open.

The incident happened between 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Sept. 28 as Barbara Jett, 43, of Detroit, her daughter, Sherita Jett, 16, and niece, Jamesha Harris, 24, dined in the restaurant on Orchard Lake Road.

"Mrs. Jett had eaten one half of her steak and was moving some large mushrooms and onions off of the second half," lawyer David Moffitt said. "She noticed two white things that she thought were maggots. One of the girls said, 'Oh, that's just rice.' But when Mrs. Jett went to move them one dropped off the plate and moved across the table."

Moffitt said a manager was called to the table.

"The manager kind of smiled at them and there was a noisy scene," Moffitt said.

"Jamesha started to get nauseous. Mrs. Jett took her niece and daughter outside and all three began throwing up in the parking lot. They said a waitress and a male employee watched them and laughed at them."

Moffitt said police were called, a report was made and all three went to Detroit Receiving Hospital for treatment. He said the lawsuit will be filed within a week charging the restaurant with negligence and seeking in excess of \$25,000 in damages.

Lamarck Brown, district manager for the steakhouse, said: "The police report is false. The things that happened were not as reported. There were no maggots."

Brown said the health department was called and "we were given a full, clean bill of health. We have business as usual at the restaurant. If a lawsuit is filed, we will address that when we have to."

Ronald Grimes, administrator for the county's Environmental Health Services, said investigators did not find any maggots in the meat at the restaurant.

"There were some worms found in a batch of peanuts," Grimes said. "This is quite common when you have restaurants that serve bulk peanuts with patrons tossing the shells on the floor."

"The manager got rid of the whole container of peanuts, and they remain open for business. We examined the whole issue of serving peanuts in this manner 15 years ago and it was found to be an acceptable practice."

IN OAKLAND COUNTY

Troy revises new alarm

City learns \$1,000 fine for false emergencies exceeds state limit of \$500 penalty for offenders.

By Douglas Ilka
The Detroit News

Troy officials were forced to amend a recently adopted false alarm ordinance — even before the law took effect — because they learned it was illegal.

The law, which was to have gone into effect Jan. 1, raised the maximum fine for repeated home and business false alarms to \$1,000, Police Chief Lawrence Carey said.

But the city had to junk it after learning the state Home Rules Cities Act restricts false alarm penalties to a maximum of \$500.

"It's expensive to respond to false alarms, and we had hoped that by raising the fines, we could weed out some of the major offenders," Carey said.

He estimated there are at least 5,700 security alarms in the city.

"There are some people out there who don't mind paying \$1,000 or \$2,000 to have the police come out 10 times a year to check their alarms. It's cheaper than hiring a security company."

Carey said police responded to 6,015 alarms from homes and businesses last year — but only 11 of the calls turned out to be valid emergency responses.

Under Troy's old city law, homeowners or businesses were allowed one free false alarm each calendar year. They were charged \$10 for a second false alarm, \$25 for a third and \$100 for each successive false alarm.

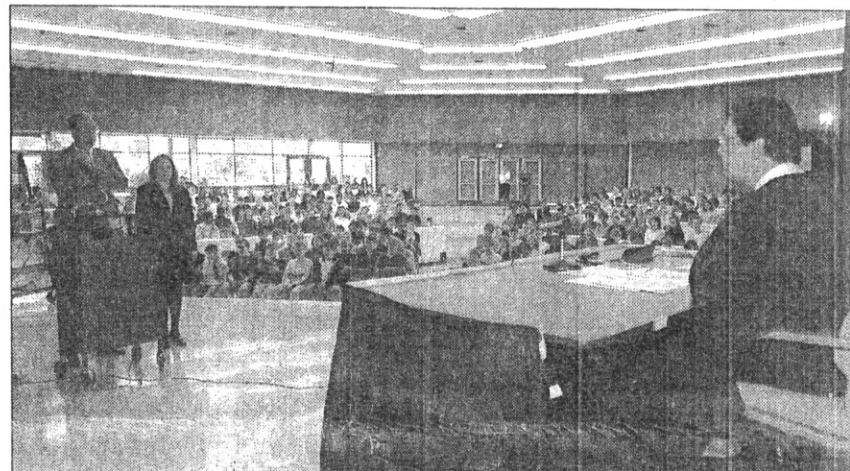
The new, amended ordinance approved by the City Council will allow two free false alarms per year. For false alarms three through six, the fine will be \$100 each; for seven to 10, a \$200 fine for each; and a \$500 fine for every false alarm over ten.

Security companies have supported the increased fines, pointing out that there are a number of reasons for false alarms ranging from user mistakes to poorly installed alarm systems to adverse weather conditions.

Tim Gerback, sales manager for Masada Security in Troy, said even the best efforts by his company can be thwarted by user error.

"When an alarm goes off, we routinely call the home or business before calling the police," said Gerback, whose company monitors 12,000 alarms in southeast Michigan.

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