



Members respond to Robbery Prevention clinic

Over 60 area business people and their employees took advantage of two free seminars on December 8 offering insights into robbery prevention. After a rash of robberies occurred across the Harbor Country area in November, the Chamber of Commerce took the initiative to bring a new awareness to this timely subject.

Chikaming Township Police Chief James Stormont recommended that the chamber seek assistance from the Berrien County Sheriff's Department Crime Prevention Unit. It was here that Deputy Karen Klug offered her services

to provide Robbery Prevention clinics.

"Though normally we would limit attendance to a free seminar to Chamber members, we felt that the seriousness of this particular issue warranted opening our doors to all business owners and employees," said Chamber President Mike Hojnacki. "The response was stronger than we had ever imagined. We had scheduled one seminar for 7 p.m. at the Harbor Grand Hotel, but after initial discussion with various business leaders we added another 3:30 p.m. session at Miller's Country House."

Deputy Klug, backed by a strong history in law enforcement, seemed to

be the perfect presenter for this type of seminar. Equally comfortable in portraying a frantic victim or a nasty robber, her expressive style moved the hour-long presentation forward sharing a wealth of information that will not bode well for would-be robbers.

Klug began the program by saying that armed robbery is potentially the most serious crime that can be committed. The key factor in any robbery attempt is to safeguard the lives of the employees, the customers and law enforcement.

Defining the term, robbery indicates the presence of a person and implied force against them. Burglary is an action against property with the intent to steal. A robber perceives that the profit is worth the risk. In these times of higher joblessness, the motivation is there. "Would be robbers have a reasonable expectation that they won't get caught," Klug said. Of course, the recent arrest of a suspect in the Harbor Country robberies demonstrates the flaw in that thinking.

Offering safeguards, the deputy discussed lighting of property for good visibility, maintaining a closed circuit television and tape recording system, keeping doors and windows clear, cleaning up overgrown landscaping, and having distinct plans of communication in case of an emergency.

She said that employees have just as much responsibility in thwarting robbery as their bosses. "Employees should remain alert and observant, watching for suspicious persons or activities," explained Klug. "They should greet every customer with full eye contact. If anything, you have just had the oppor-

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THE KEY IS SURVIVAL-- Deputy Karen Klug of the Berrien County Sheriff's Department Crime Prevention Unit captivated two audiences on December 8 with her Robbery Prevention clinics. (Above) Klug tells a group at Miller's Country House about what to do if their business is robbed. Over 60 business people and their employees took part in the seminar arranged by the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce. The seminars were open to all businesses, including non-members, due to the serious nature of the topic. Harbor Country was the recent target of serial robber. A suspect is now in custody.



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More than visions of sugar plums

By Michael Hojnacki, Chamber President

It would be a wonderful life if everything were handed to us on a silver platter. As business people we could easily appreciate continually higher profits, lower costs, reliable employees, especially if they came with little effort. Unfortunately, that isn't a real life picture.

So as we wrap up a season that includes visions of sugarplums, we also have to look at the hard cold facts that face us in the coming months. Winter sets its grip into Harbor Country as January and February slowly tick off the darkest days. It is my hope that the Chamber can utilize the talents of its membership during this "downtime" and come up with ideas to incorporate the winter months into a healthy part of our business picture.

We already have a number of projects going full bore. The Guide Committee is busy working on the 2004 publication to be released in advance of Art Attack near the end of April. I suspect the Art Attack Committee will be meeting shortly after the Holidays. These two committees are the harbingers of spring. Working on them during the winter gives us a sense of hope for a better year ahead.

Taking command of one of our most important projects is Patty Prino, the dynamo who heads Member Services. She operates a store in Union Pier called Patty's Picks and it seems she's taken her business plan and adopted it to her membership philosophy— "If Patty picks you as a potential member, you can be sure she's not giving up until you're part of the membership collection." That's going to bode well for the chamber's bottom line.

Speaking of bottom lines, the Chamber and Lodging Executive Committees have started negotiating a new joint operating agreement. This was an agreement entered into a number of years ago to share the expense of operating

the Chamber office.

Our initial meeting was polite to say the least. I laid all the Chamber's cards on the table— we need to deal with our deficit (due mainly to a drop in membership renewals), and we need some cash to promote the Chamber locally. Right now the agreement calls for an equal share in office operating expenses which nobody seems to mind. The sticking point is giving 100% of the net proceeds of the Guide to Lodging. Again, there is no real problem with the money used in promoting the area beyond its reach. It's just at this moment in time— maybe this year and next year— we need to concentrate on promoting the Chamber to potential members, to our own residents, to our local governments and to ourselves.

It is my hope that the Lodging Association sees this as an economic adjustment similar to the one that provided their funds at the inception of the contract. By promoting our mission to foster a strong, unified business community, I feel membership will grow.

Member Services is going to be actively promoting Chamber benefits— Guide advertising, group health insurance, support for several major events, free listings on the website, and advocacy of business at the local and state level. You'll see some local advertising calling for members. You'll see posters and brochures in strategic locations. It's a good plan. It's going to take some coin to fund it. And once it's rolling, I don't think it will stop.

Maybe this is my vision of sugarplums Harbor Country-style. We have this brand of eight charming communities and one great lake. We have been successful in making that point known throughout the Midwest and beyond. It's time to bring that message home. It's time to pick ourselves up by the bootstraps and move forward with strength in numbers.

Harbor Country® Connection

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tunity to get a good look at a person—robber or not. Employees should also mentally review the actions they would take in case of an emergency.”

Klug offered tips on opening and closing a business, how to identify suspicious activity, how to protect cash, and making a safe bank deposit. One of the most important pieces of advice, however, was what to do when confronted by a robber.

“Quiet compliance is the key,” she said. “Do not resist, the money is not worth your life.” She recommended that the victim follow the robbers commands exactly and advise him if you have to reach for something. She said don’t volunteer information and most of all don’t lie.

One of the keys to the later apprehension of the suspect is to get a good description of the person and the vehicle used to get away. Klug warned that victims should never run after a robber. “There are several reasons not to chase a robber and the first is you could get

shot,” she said. “Law enforcement responding to a 911 or alarm call might consider you a suspect as well. Your main responsibility is to secure the scene so that evidence is not tampered with. The first thing to do is lock the door.”

The deputy showed the audience real weapons (though welded shut) so that they could become familiar with the difference between a revolver and semi-automatic pistol. She also gave clues and methods to aid in remembering distinctive characteristics of the robber for later identification.

The seminars concluded with the resolve that the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce will be organizing a Business Watch Group for its members. The hope would be to communicate problems and suspicious activity before it gets out of hand. The organizational meeting for Business Watch is planned for mid-January, 2004. Visit www.harborcountry.org/calendar for the latest update.



Happier Holidays

A December 11 mixer at the Three Oaks branch of Alliance Banking Company established the mood for the season to be jolly. Over 50 chamber members and potential members attended. Rick Lutterbach, CEO of Alliance Banking Company, Brenda Stellema, and Dave Moll (hoping to join the chamber) join the fun. Stellema reinforced the bank’s and her personal commitment to the area. Brenda serves on the HC Board of Directors.

ROBBERY: What Do I Do Now!

COMPILED FROM INFORMATION
SUPPLIED BY THE BERRIEN
COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT
CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

ROBBERY SURVIVAL

- Quiet compliance. Do not resist. (Money is not worth your life!)
- Follow commands of robber
- Advise robber if you have to reach
- Don’t volunteer information
- Don’t lie
- Include bait money
- Keep customers calm
- Consider that any weapon is loaded

BE OBSERVANT, BE A GOOD WITNESS

- Number of suspects
- Physical description— color, race, sex, right or left handed, age, height and weight, glasses, tattoos, clothing color, complexion
- Look at person, clothing can easily be changed
- Look at escape vehicle— car, truck, 2 door, 4 door, unusual sounds, music, color

DON’T CHASE OR FOLLOW SUSPECT

- You could get shot
- Police may think you’re involved
- Secure the business
- Report injuries
- Meet police at a different entrance so as not to contaminate evidence

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH WEAPON IDENTIFICATION

- Semi-automatic (slim on all sides)
- Revolver (barrel on all sides)
- Even a child’s gun can be painted black and look like the real thing
- Remember color
- What did the hand grips look like— wood, metal.

AFTER SUSPECT LEAVES

- Dial 911
- Protect evidence and fingerprints
- Note method and route of escape
- Ask employees and customers to write down descriptions, but don’t compare notes
- Let law enforcement answer questions poised by the media

THE KEY IS SURVIVAL!

ROBBERY: PREVENTION TIPS

COMPILED FROM INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE BERRIEN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

LIGHTING

Interior lighting for visibility
Well-lit interior aids imagery of closed circuit television (CCTV)
Report non-working lights
Adjust times to compensate for changes in daylight

DOORS AND WINDOWS

Be sure there is two-way visibility
Keep doors and windows free of signs
Mark doorways with small dots at 5, 5 1/2 and 6-foot points
Provide doors and gates to back rooms that lock automatically

VISIBILITY

Keep cash register area clear
Do not clutter counter
Keep aisles clear of displays

LANDSCAPING

Keep shrubs less than 3 feet high
Trim tree canopies to 6 feet above ground
Consider where your dumpster is located

SECURITY CAMERAS AND MIRRORS

Be sure cameras and mirrors are prominently displayed
Check position of camera often
Maintain camera and tape recording equipment
Keep recorder separate and secure
Regenerate tapes

COMMUNICATION

Know where phones are
Know how to contact police
Put emergency numbers by phones
Contact police even for a potential problem

HOW TO USE 911

Wait for dial tone
Speak clearly and slowly
Advise of the type of emergency
Give name, address and telephone number
Stay on the phone

EMPLOYEES FUNCTION IN PREVENTION

Remain alert and observant
Watch for and report suspicious persons or activities
Greet all customers, make eye

contact
Review company policies
Mentally review actions in case of emergency

OPENING AND CLOSING

Two employees should open and close
Visually inspect location before opening
Once inside, keep doors locked until ready to open
Check all areas of the store at closing
Lock all doors and do not let anyone in, no matter what
Leave together
Scan parking lot
Be aware of anyone following you
Change your routine. Use different routes

WHAT IS SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY?

People monitoring your business
People asking about closing, volume of business, amount of money
People loitering
People waiting for lull in activity
People who look out of the ordinary (long coat in the summer)
Consider all parked vehicles
Use non-emergency police numbers to report suspicious activity

CASH PROTECTION SYSTEM

Develop a business plan for cash protection and follow it
Keep as little money in the cash register as possible
Post signs that you do not accept large bills
Use a drop safe
Do not count cash in presence of customers
Consider the use of bait money— recorded serial numbers

MAKING A BANK DEPOSIT

Do not advertise you're going to the bank
Go during daylight hours
Go directly to the bank
Don't wear uniforms or badges
Do not approach a night deposit if someone else is there
If being pursued, make yourself known



THE RIVER VALLEY MARCHING MUSTANGS played a jazzy version of traditional Christmas tunes as they kept the cadence for the annual Three Oaks Christmas parade. Special thanks to the band, director Arianna Martin, and Principal Jose Vera for making this happen.



SANTA, IS IT TRUE that Christmas is a member benefit of joining the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce? Not exactly, but those in the know could tell you that this Santa Claus is a member in good standing. He was visiting with kids at the Three Oaks Township Library on Dec. 6.

Christmas Traditions...

Harbor Country started a new tradition of celebrating a combined Country Christmas in 2003. This year the event melded the previous events of New Buffalo and Three Oaks, but next year it will include events for all of the Chamber communities. For two weeks the towns shared parade slots and visits by St. Nick. The event was culminated by the annual Christmas House Walk on Dec. 7. Thanks to all who participated this year, and those who hope to next year.



State Senator Ron Jelinek of Three Oaks never misses the beat or a good parade and the chance to visit his constituents.

"This Weekend" makes its debut

It started as an idea, then a weekly email sent out by Patty Toussaint from the Chamber office. "Harbor Country This Weekend" is an update for both Chamber members and visitors who want to know what's going on in the area for the upcoming weekend. The process to produce this piece, however, is cumbersome and exhausting. Patty literally scans all the local newspapers for press releases, ads and even classifieds that help provide the content for this weekend update. Hats off to Patty for her dedication and commitment to get this publication out! Help is on the way Patty.

This publication caught the attention of the Communications and Marketing Committee, chaired by Mike Hojnacki. Efforts are underway to streamline the process and get local

newspaper editors to collaborate directly with the Chamber office to get their information out in advance of their publication dates.

Beyond the weekly email, we've now taken this to the next level and created a special page on the Chamber's web site so that all visitors can bookmark and find it quickly. The easy to remember web page address is:

www.harborcountry.org/weekends

The web debut of this page at the beginning of the winter season is very timely in that it offers great weekend getaway information for those spontaneous travelers that want to make last minute plans for their great escape. Our own web site statistics confirm that there is a high level of hits to event related pages, indicating that "something to do" is an important part of visitors

wanting to plan their getaways. So if you're expecting guests or visitors, just give them the above address so they can tune into area happenings while they are here.

This Weekend content is still being collected, colated and sorted by Patty, so if you want to help out and have an upcoming last minute planned event or happening, just let her know!

Email: patty@harborcountry.org

Phone: 269-469-5409

Information should be received by Wednesday of each week to make the weekend posting. If you are not receiving the email version of "This Weekend" just contact Patty or Sue so they can put your email address in the broadcast database.



GOOD NEIGHBOR RETURNS- A Harbor Country ribbon-cutting ceremony returns after a long hiatus, with the reopening of the Sensational Spa location in Union Pier. Pictured are Margaret Anderson, Diane Botica, Brenda Stellema, VP Karen Gear, Troy Weber, President Mike Hojnacki, Jackie VanHorn, Brian Van Horn, Patty Prino and John Nelson.

Sensational Spas adds warmth to Union Pier mix

Sensational Spas announced the opening of their brand new showroom and retail store on December 1st. Located at 16170 Red Arrow Hwy, Union Pier in the newly constructed Union Pier Town Centre they feature Emerald and Dimension One Spas, Nordic Hot Tubs, as well as Helo and Finlandia Saunas.

The retail store will carry a complete line of spa chemicals along with spa and

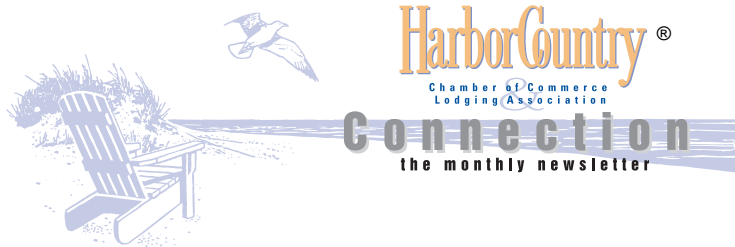
sauna accessories. Pool chemicals will be available in season. Local phone number is (269) 469-0077 or you can visit them on the web at sensationalspas.biz or send e-mail at sensational@qtm.net. Store hours will be Monday, Thursday, Friday 10am-6pm; Saturday 9am-4pm, closed Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday. Hours will expand in the spring.

It's nice when good neighbors return home to Harbor Country.

Charles Dresser
Handyman Service
Charles Dresser,
owner
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Yolanda Kolbert, manager
139 N. Whittaker Street
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**ROBBERY
 PREVENTION**

**VISIONS
 OF MORE**

**WEEKEND
 DEBUT**

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
JANUARY					1	2 Post Hot Deals!	3
	4	5 Community Development, 5:30 TBA	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12 Member Services, 6:00 TBA	13	14 Lodging Meeting, Noon @ Hannah's	15 Connection Deadline	16 Post Hot Deals! Guide ad forms sent out.	17
	18	19 PR for Guide photos and cover art.	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27 Chamber Board, Noon, TBA Marketing, after Board Meeting	28	29	30	31

UPDATES AVAILABLE AT www.harborcountry.org/calendar or 469-5409