



BUSINESS

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Cops: Arrests near in Eastland shooting

Steve Pardo / The Detroit News

Harper Woods — Authorities are close to making arrests in the Saturday shooting at Eastland Center that left two men wounded, Deputy Police Chief James Burke said Monday.

Quick arrests could ease apprehension among shoppers. Officials are worried people may avoid the mall during the Christmas shopping season.

"It just makes me leery to come shopping," said Mary Glossery, 53, of Harper Woods. "I will find someplace else to go."

But the location of the shootings was just bad luck for Eastland, the city's largest taxpayer, Burke said. "This incident had nothing to do with the mall or Harper Woods," he said. "It's about two groups that met up and decided to settle things while they were at the mall."

The two groups of men ages 18-20 — Burke was careful not to call them gangs — have had an ongoing dispute since January, said Burke, though he declined to say about what.

Two members of one group pulled handguns and fired four to six rounds. An 18-year-old in the other group was shot in the chest and remains hospitalized.

Another man, a 35-year-old employee at one of the mall stores, was shot in the leg and treated at St. John Hospital.

The shooting was the third at the mall this fall. Friday, shots were fired at a bus stop. In September, a man was shot dead in his car outside the mall.

Renee Borowicz, a stay-at-home parent from Grosse Pointe, said she would think twice before taking her children to Eastland. "It is kind of scary," she said. "I try to do a lot of

online shopping, it's just more convenient. I'm not sure what more the mall can do. It's just the environment."

The environment — or the perception of Eastland as a second-tier center — could irreparably harm it, said Ken Dalto, a Farmington Hills-based retail analyst. "It's going to hurt the mall — no question," he said. "It's a struggling mall, it's a marginal mall."

Denise Melonson, whose family has operated Fashion Entourage for the past 10 years, said the mall was full Saturday before the shootings. On Monday afternoon, she said things had returned to normal — smaller crowds and slow sales.

"You just have to deal with it and roll with the punches. It's been slow and the economy has a lot to do with it," she said. "A lot of stores have moved out of here. But I'm hanging on."

Mall officials didn't return calls Monday. The Harper Woods mayor and city manager could not be reached.

Burke said the mall remains safe. Harper Woods police patrol the area and work closely with security at the center. "I took my family shopping there yesterday," he said Monday.

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