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Masked gunman robs Moraga Safeway

By *Nick Marnell*

Moraga police responded to an armed robbery the evening of Jan. 18 at the Moraga Safeway.

According to Lt. Brian South of the Moraga Police Department, an armed suspect entered the store at 7:53 p.m., pointed a handgun at a clerk at one of the middle checkstands, demanded money and grabbed the register drawer. The suspect, described as a male in his mid-20s, approximately 5 feet 11 inches tall and wearing a ski mask and dark clothing, ran out of the building into a silver vehicle. He escaped with more than \$500. No one was hurt during the incident.

The silver vehicle was seen heading toward Orinda on Moraga Way, but South said police received no reports from either the Lafayette or Orinda Safeway, and the Moraga robbery was under investigation as an isolated incident.

Moraga police officers attended a retirement dinner for former Town Manager and Chief of Police Bob Priebe on Jan. 18 at the Moraga Country Club, but South said that the staffing of uniformed officers in town that evening was normal.

Neither management at the Moraga Safeway nor officials at the Safeway corporate office would comment about the robbery. "We are working closely with the Moraga Police Department and providing whatever information we can to help in their investigation," said Wendy Gutshall, director of public and government affairs for Safeway Northern California.

The robbery comes three days after Moraga police and firefighters from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District found two men dead in a trailer lot near the Moraga Ranch House. "There is no evidence of foul play," South said. The police await results from a toxicology report in order to determine the cause of the deaths, which South said could take up to eight weeks. South said that all aspects of the incident are under investigation. On Sunday Jan. 21, police and firefighters also responded to the report of a fatality on Hetfield Way. "We initially called the death suspicious, but after the results of the autopsy and our investigation, we ruled that the man died of natural causes," said MPD Police Chief Jon King.

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