

Prevention programs help cut crime rates in University area

By RICHARD WAGONER
Of the Emerald

An intensive crime prevention program focusing on rape and residential burglary in the West University area seems to be paying off.

Rape, attempted rape and sodomy in the West University area dropped 64 percent in 1980 from the previous year, according to statistics released this week by the Eugene Police Department.

Residential burglary decreased 26 percent during the same time period.

"In crime prevention, West University is one of the most responsive areas," says Eugene police officer Skip Stokes, a member of the Community Officer Patrol Team.

"In the crimes they targeted — rape and residential burglaries — the rate was much lower than the city average."

City-wide statistics indicate that reported rapes decreased last year 29 percent, while residential burglaries dropped 1 percent.

Three rapes were reported in the West University area during 1980, compared to eight in 1979. One attempted rape and one sodomy was reported in 1980, compared with two attempted rapes and four sodomy cases the year before.

Police received 98 residential burglary reports in 1980, a decrease of 36.

The West University neighborhood group, in conjunction with the Eugene Police COP Team, has been offering rape prevention workshops and burglary prevention programs for the past year.

Stokes says he'd like to believe West University crime rates have dropped because of stepped-up crime prevention efforts, but he admits it's too early to tell.

"We have some very dramatic decreases over last year," Stokes says. "But it would be

presumptuous to say it's all because of the COP Team. We like to look at a five-year trend. You can't just look at one year."

But Stokes says evidence does suggest crime prevention programs are working. Neighborhoods where crime prevention techniques were stressed showed reduced reports for many kinds of crime.

Shoplifting reports also reflected stepped-up police efforts, Stokes says. Some 141 shoplifting cases were reported in 1980, compared to 85 in 1979.

The number of shoplifters hasn't really changed, Stokes says, but increased efforts by police and merchants has resulted in more shoplifters being caught and prosecuted.

Other crimes showing decreases include aggravated assault, simple assault, robbery and auto theft.

Bike theft was up again, with 254 thefts reported, compared to 219 in 1979.

Commercial burglaries increased 29 percent, with 98 reported in 1980.

Campus crime statistics also showed decreases in assault and robbery, but burglary, rape and bicycle theft was up from a year earlier.

One rape and one attempted rape was reported on campus during 1980. No rapes or attempted rapes were reported in 1979. Residential burglary on campus increased three-fold, and bike theft reports went from 142 in 1979 to 203 in 1980.

Other reported thefts on campus — not counting bicycles — increased from 181 to 207.

Stokes says he hopes more neighborhood groups and individuals will take advantage of the crime prevention resources offered by Eugene police to continue crime reduction.

"The resource is here. It's just a matter of motivating the people to utilize it.

"The only program that will significantly reduce crime will take cooperation of citizens to educate themselves about crime, learn their vulnerability and then do something about it. It's just neighbors helping neighbors."

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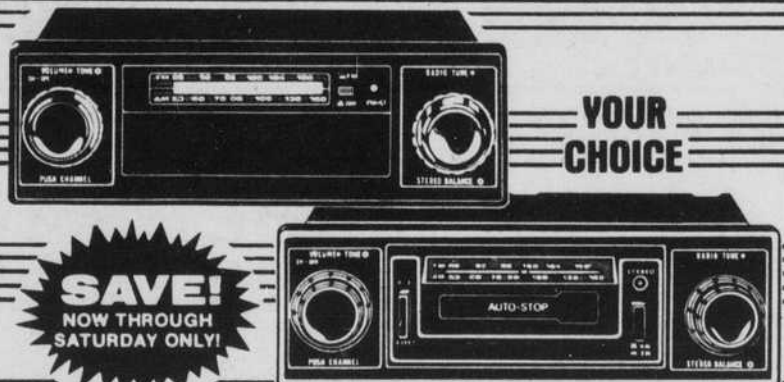
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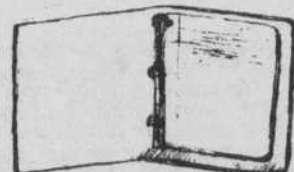
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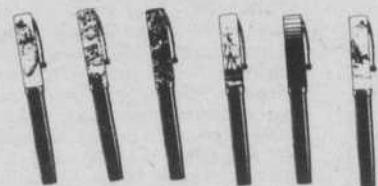
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