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SAXON

Continued from Page 1

and a year investigating sex crimes. He combines his degree in sociology from Oregon State University with his background in police work and an ability to talk and to listen.

Sometimes when Saxon sees male college students at the 7Eleven store on 11th Avenue and on the corner of 13th and Alder, he'll take the time to talk to them about acceptable behavior toward women.

"I remind them, I tell them about rape and date rape," Saxon said.

Saxon said he has issued 15 citations in the three weeks since he's been on the beat, and more than 10 times as many warnings to people committing misdemeanor infractions for vandalism, minor assaults and victimless crimes such as drinking in public, urinating in public and trespassing.

"I'm really easygoing. I'm not on a power trip," he said. "I treat people with respect."

However, Saxon said he believes the community is far less tolerant of the situation on the streets, and that the businesspeople have surrendered to the circumstances. He said business people in the area have been relieved to see only 12 or 15 people blocking the sidewalk, instead of the usual 20.

"They felt helpless," he said. "People are paying taxes and are trying to make a living."

Illegal activity and complaints from community members about safety led the University to take action, said Jane Oliver, University assistant vice president of institutional affairs.

"So far the response has been quite positive," Oliver said.

Several people who frequent the University business area agree that patrols are important, but said they had been "harassed" in the past by police officers in the area.

John Kiefer, who said he comes to the University area to spend time with friends, believes wholeheartedly in having a police officer patrol the area.

"As long as he's not harassing people," Kiefer said.

Kiefer said he didn't think, however, that the added police presence would make a difference for the area businesses.

"No matter what's going on in the streets, people will come to the businesses anyway," he said. "The business people should be taking care of their businesses, not looking out the window."

"I've got money in this bank, I've got a job," said Glen Jennings, a cook at the Kona Cafe,

New officer does not satisfy all businesses

By Cathy Peterson
Emerald Reporter

The Wegroup PC/Architects and Planners firm is closing its doors on 13th Avenue for good.

After 40 years of doing business at 863 E. 13th St., between Pedal Power and the Kona Cafe, the company has signed a lease for a new building on Country Club Road.

Wegroup employees are tired of people using their front garden area for a bed, dog kennel, trash pile and even toilet.

"Within the last five years this area has turned into a street jungle," said Michael Marczuk, vice president and architect at the firm. "We hate to leave, we love this area, but policing the area myself became too much for me to handle."

The office, which is set back from the sidewalk and shaded by a contemporary wood fence, looks onto a tree and a bench. A bicycle leans against the fence, under a sign reading "No dogs or bicycle parking."

Marczuk said clients have had to dodge cyclists using the bike path in front of the sidewalk, a route he called a "walking disaster."

"This area has become a no-man's land. The city only cleans it once a month," he said.

Part of the problem has been the inability of the police to handle the number of people spending time on the streets, he said. And paying more money for a special beat does not seem right to Marczuk.

"Why should we as taxpayers have to pay additional sums of money to keep a police force in this area?" he said.

pointing to the U.S. Bank on the corner of 13th and Alder.

"I should be able to sit on this bench," he said.

Still, Saxon said he's had a positive response. He said was recently talking to a group of teenagers, when another man he had arrested three days earlier approached the group, threatening Saxon. The teenagers grabbed the man and pulled him aside, warning him to leave the officer alone.

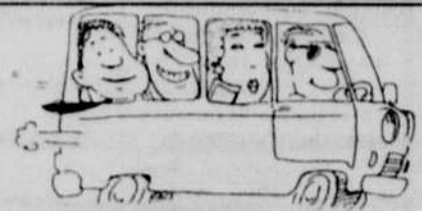


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