

West University guides to reduce crime, increase area security

■ **STREETS:** The guides can not make arrests and do not have more authority than average citizens

By **Abe Estimada**
Community Reporter

Downtown mall guides with their familiar crimson hats and jackets began walking the streets of the West University neighborhood Tuesday morning.

Two downtown mall guides, now known as the West University guides to area merchants, will patrol East 13th Avenue. The West University guides will also be walking through an area between East 12th and 14th avenues and Patterson and Kincaid streets.

Merchants along East 13th Avenue said they are excited about bringing two more pairs of eyes to the area for security.

"Having people in uniform and having a presence really helps," said Richard Green, president of the University Small Business Association. "Generally, people are supportive of the idea."

The University Small Business Association, Sacred Heart Medical Center and the University are funding the six-month pilot program that brings at least three senior downtown mall guides to the West University neighborhood.

"I see them giving a lot of



Community Police Officer Ken Saxon leads two new downtown mall guides through the East 13th business area. The mall guides are hired by local businesses to patrol the downtown area.

assistance," Green said. "The idea of bringing guides to the area is a sign that we want to be safe and not harassed."

Mike Schaan, guides manager, said the West University guides cannot make arrests and are armed with pepper spray for self-defense. The guides are also equipped with cellular phones to call police in cases of emergency.

"We have no more authority than a normal citizen," Schaan said. "We ask for voluntary compliance [of ordinances]. We're not going in there to try to stop drug deals. We want to make our presence known. If there are serious problems, we call [Eugene police]."

Schaan said the West University guides will fulfill many of the same duties as their down-

town counterparts by providing information and giving assistance to visitors in the University area.

The guides program began work in 1991 in response to loitering and drug-dealing problems that plagued downtown Eugene. These same problems are now present in the West University neighborhood, and Schaan said he hopes the suc-

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Guides Manager

cess of the guides in downtown Eugene can be repeated along East 13th Avenue.

However, the increased foot traffic along East 13th Avenue and the more aggressive nature of some panhandlers and loiterers in the area pose different challenges to the guides. Police records show that the area is plagued with more incidents of drug dealing, assault and petty crimes than any other part of the city.

"We're going to be more cautious," Schaan said. "We're going to a new area, and we don't know the dynamics."

"We're going in there with a laid-back attitude and will help out people when they need it," he said. "The guides' biggest asset is to use their common sense in an unsafe situation."

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CORRECTION

In an article in the Jan. 30 edition, the *ODE* incorrectly stated that Efim Etkind was a visiting professor, when in fact, Professor Lev Loseff is the visiting professor. The *Emerald* regrets the error.

ET ALS

MEETINGS

EMU Board will sponsor a House Committee meeting today from 4 to 6 p.m. in EMU Century Room D. For more information, call 346-3720.

Multicultural Center will sponsor the first strategic meeting to combat anti-immigration legislation in Oregon today at 4:30 p.m. in the Multicultural Center. For more information, call 346-4207.

Student Senate will meet tonight at 7 in the EMU Board Room. For more information, call 346-3749.

RELIGION

Newman Center will sponsor a student Mass and social tonight at 9 at 1850 Emerald St. For more information, call 346-7021.



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