

Robberies: Some small businesses hit hardest

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fix other problems. "It has to do with society," he said.

Although he didn't have one big answer to the problem, Schneider said there are a number of steps that businesses can take to appear less vulnerable.

Schneider's suggestions ranged from simple methods to more costly security measures.

In creating an environment of natural surveillance, Schneider suggested making the store visible by keeping the windows free of merchandise and adjusting the lighting.

He also said it is important to secure all side entrances and exits, which are not typically used by customers.

Bechler said the Glenwood would be taking some of these same steps, including locking the side door where the robber entered the building, to help ensure that another robbery does not occur in the future.

He also said a few customers were concerned. "We tried to ease their tension by keeping the place a little more lit, and by keeping an employee out front at all times," he said.

Schneider said other options include mirrors and cameras. Although these options have not been effective in deterring the robbers, he said, they are helpful in identifying the criminal later.

Another option is to install a drop safe, which allows the employee to regulate the amount of money available. Schneider said that after the device was sampled in convenience stores around the country, "robberies dropped dramatically."

But for most places, these options aren't practical.

"We are not a big place to be taking big security measures," said Vicki Shultz, the owner of Sweet Treats at 1005 E. 19th Ave.

After an attempted robbery at her ice cream store on Feb. 14, she said that just about any place can be robbed. However, in light of the robbery, she said employees of

Sweet Treats would be more aware in general.

"Anyone who has a cash register is vulnerable," she said.

Another preventative measure that Schneider suggested is to keep no more than \$50 in the register and to advertise the fact that there isn't more money on hand.

Mason said the warnings she and Schneider give are mostly a reminder, and that many stores are already practicing these methods of prevention.

"They are right on the money," Mason said. "I see why they would be really frustrated, especially when they are doing everything that they can and they are still being robbed."

She added that she was most concerned with the effects that robberies can have on small businesses.

Both Schneider and Mason said it would only make matters worse if employees decided to carry weapons.

"You can't introduce a gun into an already bad situation," Mason said. Both Schneider and Mason said the best method in a robbery is to comply with demands.

When Rene Berry, owner of the Berry Patch, 1609 E. 19th Ave., was attacked at the door of her business, she had a much different instinct. "I fought back," Berry said. "I met him at the front door, he grabbed me and I reacted."

She said her actions were not because of the money, and that they were only a defense mechanism.

"I'm 44 years old, and by growing up as a woman you are always prepared for a situation," she said. "It was a gut reaction of having to live with that. It wasn't an ego thing or an attempt at being a hero."

Berry said her reactions scared the attacker, and he left the premises without injuring her.

Although there have been a number of robberies, Mason said she feels the situation could be worse. "While robberies may be up, people aren't getting hurt," she said. "I'm pretty happy."

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Monday, March 2	3:30-5:00 p.m.	Individual Meetings—Questions & Answers for those who have done their tax forms but may have short questions	EMU Century Rooms C, E, F
	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Tax Preparation Assistance—F and J visa holders with income	Willamette 100
Tuesday, March 3	1:15-3:30 p.m.	Individual Meetings—Questions & Answers for those who have done their tax forms but may have short questions	EMU Century A
	6:30-8:00 p.m.	Reporting Requirements for F, J and Q visa holders with NO income	Willamette 100
Monday, April 6	12:00-2:00 p.m.	Individual Meetings—Questions & Answers for those who have done their tax forms but may have short questions	EMU Century Rooms A, B, C
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