Malls cancel trick-or-treating

Officials say the e-mails have nothing to do with their decision

By Erin Cooney for the Emerald

For the first time in many years, Eugene area shopping centers aren't inviting kids to trick-or-treat within their walls this Halloween.

Mall officials made this decision out of concern that celebrating the holiday would be inappropriate in light of the Sept. 11 attacks, and that promoting trick-or-treating in their establishments this year is not the best choice.

Some mall employees, however, believe that a recent rash of threatening e-mails may have contributed to the decision.

The e-mails in question, copies of which can be found on the Urban Legends Research Centre Web site (www.ulrc.com.au), have appeared all over the country in several different variations, but the gist of all of them is the same. The emails contain information suggesting that just days before the Sept. 11 attacks, someone's boyfriend (or girlfriend, in some cases) told their partner not to fly commercially on Sept. 11 and not to go to the mall on Oct. 31, causing rumors that malls would be unsafe today.

The Web site states that it was "inevitable" that someone would circulate such information in order to exploit the widespread concern about further terrorist attacks. The site also notes that the e-mails don't contain any substantial or factual information and therefore should not be considered reliable sources.

The FBI has said that the e-mail predictions are unfounded. FBI spokeswoman Beth Anne Steele said the FBI does not consider the chain e-mails "a credible threat."

Jan Power, spokeswoman for the Eugene Police Department,

An example of a hoax e-mail sent:

I think you all know that I don't send out boaxes and don't do the reactionary thing and send out anything that crosses my path. This one, however, is a friend

My friend's friend was dating a guy from Afghanistan up until a month ago. She had a date with him around 9/6 and was stood up. She was understandably upset and went to his home to find it impletely emptied.

On 9/10, she received a letter from her poyfriend explaining that he wished he

be taken seriously. Police will be on

heightened alert tonight, as they are

every Halloween, but they will not

be implementing any special secu-

rity measures at Gateway Mall or

Several mall employees, both at

Vantah Keo, the store manager at

Gateway and VRC, think that the e-

mails prompted mall officials to de-

Express Ltd. at VRC, said she received a letter from mall officials

stating that the reason for calling off

the Halloween tradition was the

"inappropriate nature" of the fes-

tivities in light of the events that

took place on Sept. 11.

But Keo said she believes the let-

ter is not entirely honest, and mall

management may have felt pres-

sure to stop the event after hearing

the rumors about the chain e-mails.

AT&T Wireless at VRC feels similarly.

Ryan Cook, a sales associate at

cide to cancel trick-or-treating.

Valley River Center, she said.

shared that sentiment.

was sorry it had to be like that. The par worth mentioning is that he BEGGED he 9/11 and to not to go to any malls on Halloween. As soon as everything

This is not an email that I've received and decided to pass on. This came from a phone conversation with a long-time one of his warnings being correct and devastating, I'm not willing to take the

Source: www.urlc.com.au

"Eugene seems to be very low on the threat threshold," she said.

all those young people at risk. Though neither Gateway or VRC Power also stated that as far as the police department knows, the e-mails are a hoax and should not

> Paul Daniel, the store manager at Gateway's America The Beautiful Dreamer furniture store said that despite the mall's official stance, his store will still give out treats. He said he is unconcerned about safety issues on Halloween night, and his

> Dana Vugteveen, general manager at Gateway, said the decision to cancel today's events had been discussed since the Sept. 11 attacks but

> He said because Halloween is a day that could involve "mischievous pranks," mall officials thought children being with their families in their own neighborhoods and getting to know their neighbors was

> Mall officials say the safety of

not to get on any commercial airlines on happened on the 11th, she called the FBI and has since turned over the letter.

friend of mine last night. I may be wrong, and I hope I am. However, with chance on the second.

Photo by Kim Samitore for the Emerald representatives) don't want to put

will sponsor Halloween events, both have made it the individual stores' prerogatives to hand out candy.

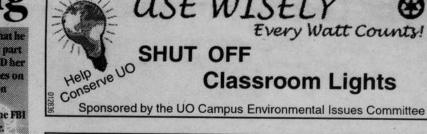
employees have not expressed worry either.

became official a few weeks ago.

a safer bet this year.

shoppers and employees is their top concern for the holiday.

Erin Cooney is a freelance reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald.



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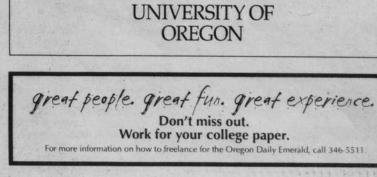
2:30 P.M. CEREMONY 3:30 P.M. RECEPTION 4:00 P.M. 1876 LECTURES

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