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## Bike theft

continued from page 1

### Education and registration

While acknowledging that thieves can probably bust any lock, DPS Associate Director Tom Hicks said that most stolen bikes are either locked improperly or not locked at all.

"If you have a good lock, it still takes time for somebody to work through it," Hicks said, adding that DPS attempts to bring this message to students each year.

When new students move into the residence halls each fall, DPS hosts a "Bike Corral," a roped-off area where students store bikes during their first days on campus and receive information about how to properly secure a bike. The best system, Hicks said, is to fasten a U-lock around a bicycle's frame, front tire and rack and to supplement that lock with a chain wrapped around the rack, the frame and the back tire.

Seeking to return stolen bikes to rightful owners, DPS maintains a registry of bicycles on campus. Registration is voluntary and encouraged, but Hicks noted that only 5 to 10 percent of bikes reported stolen are found.

The majority of stolen bikes leave town and are often chopped into pieces to be sold as parts, he said.

Sgt. Teresa Selby of the Ashland Police Department said Oregon bike thieves typically travel in large

trucks up and down Interstate 5, steal bikes and sell the parts throughout the region.

"They'll ship parts down to California or up through Oregon," she said. "I've heard that they've traveled as far as the East Coast."

### Theft rates lower on other campuses

Also near I-5, which Selby depicted as a pipeline for bike thieves, is Oregon State University. And unlike Ashland, the Corvallis terrain is characteristic of other Willamette Valley towns: flat and biker-friendly. Though OSU bike racks are often full and ripe with potential targets, the bike theft rate per student is two-thirds of that on the Eugene campus.

Paulette Ratchford, director of OSU campus safety, said the school's bike registration program has kept theft rates relatively low.

Like the DPS program, bike registration at OSU is voluntary, and those who register receive detailed instructions about how to secure a bike and what about a bicycle is attractive to thieves.

Ratchford said that the registration stickers posted on bikes can be a deterrent, but the education aspect of bike registration is an even stronger anti-theft program.

"People tend to have a shorter learning curve when they're in a dialogue" with public safety officers,

Ratchford said.

Students registering bikes at OSU are encouraged to watch a video, in which a convicted bike thief explains that the best way to secure a bike is to use both a U-lock and a chain. A Corvallis judge ordered the man to record the tape as part of his sentence.

Because the man used to cruise through campus carrying either bolt cutters or a hydraulic U-lock splitter, the man said he was deterred by combination locking systems, which would require both lock-breaking devices.

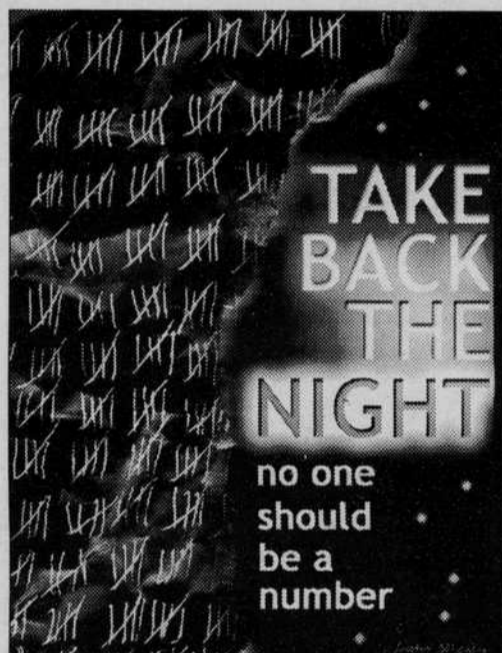
Further north and also near I-5 is Portland State University, which has the second lowest bike theft rate in the state at 1.1 thefts per 1,000 students each year. Only the Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls could boast a better record because the school had no theft rate at all. Ed Guy, director of the OTT campus security office, said no bikes were stolen in the past three years because nearly all the school's students either drive or bus to the campus, which is located in a rural area outside of the Klamath Falls city center.

PSU, on the other hand, is located in the middle of Portland's downtown, and scores of students ride bicycles on campus.

John Fowler, director of the PSU public safety office, said the key to the low theft rate on campus is the placement of bike racks in visible locations where foot traffic is high. PSU also runs a registration program and hosts an annual "Bike Rodeo," both similar programs to those DPS hosts at the University.

"There's not a lot of opportunity for somebody to come up with bolt cutters and blatantly steal a bike," he said.

E-mail community editor Darren Freeman at [darrenfreeman@dailyemerald.com](mailto:darrenfreeman@dailyemerald.com).



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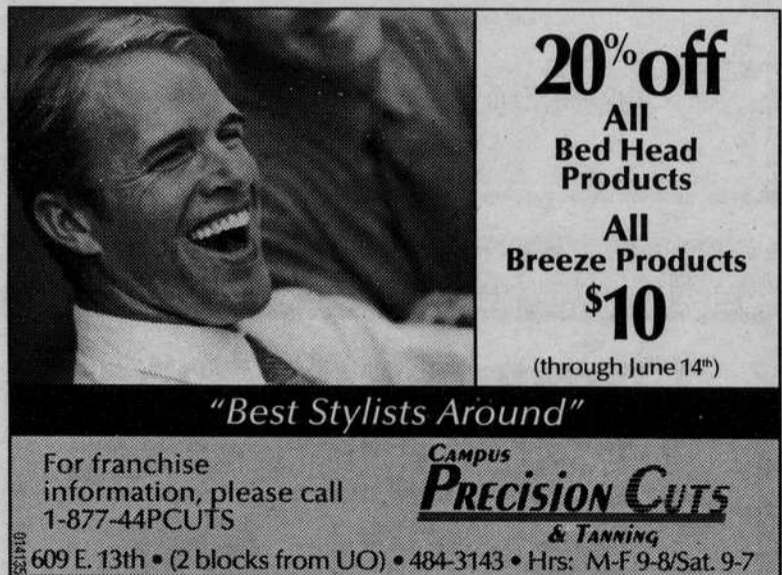


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