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Local singer/songwriter Nicole Sangsoree performs at the annual Take Back the Night rally at the EMU Amphitheater Thursday. Participants chanted and held signs and candles during the march downtown.

Erik R. Bishoff
Photographer



Activists march to end sexual violence

More than 200 people gather to rally and march from the EMU to downtown for Take Back the Night

By Ayisha Yahya
News Editor

"Stop rape."
"Hey. Hey. Ho. Ho. Sexual assault has to go."
Passionate voices chanted powerful words in the annual Take Back the Night march Thursday. More than 200 women, men and transgenders weaved through the streets of Eugene to protest violence against women and honor survivors of violence and sexual assault.

The march, which was sponsored by the ASUO Women's Center and Sexual Assault Support Services, started at the EMU Amphitheater and ended at the corner of East Eighth Avenue and Oak Street. Before the march, participants gathered for a rally at the amphitheater.

While the mood seemed festive —

with people talking, laughing and checking out brochures at informational tables — the rally's message was serious: Violence against women needs to stop.

"We need to get the word out to assure people that violence is not appropriate," Womenspace volunteer Ann-Marie Askew said. Askew, who volunteers for the organization's crisis line, said domestic violence is a huge issue and women need access to help. She added that it's important for women in abusive relationships to know they have choices.

ASUO Women's Center spokeswoman Sarah Wells agreed. "Violence against women exists, and there are survivors who need to feel that they have a space where they can be safe," she said.

In the United States, a woman is sexually assaulted every two minutes, and one in four women is a survivor of rape or attempted rape, according to Sexual Assault Support Services.

At the rally, speakers addressed various aspects of sexual assault that ranged from child abuse and assault against women with disabilities, to

violence against transgender people.

University student Austin Shaw-Phillips said transgenders are often targeted because of their status.

"Sexual assault is one of the ways people enforce gender conformity," Shaw-Phillips said, adding that people may not seek help because they don't have access to services, and the process of getting help may be retraumatizing.

After the rally, marchers set out along East 11th Avenue with participants divided into three sections: women only, gender-queer consisting of transgenders and those who identified themselves neither as men nor women, and a gender-neutral section.

Some people shouted with fists raised and feet stomping, while others walked in reverent silence. Colorful signs bobbed above their heads.

"No more violence," "No Excuse for Abuse," "No More Silence" and "Love is Strong" were a few messages.

Although it was still light out, a few people lit candles which flickered in the warm dusk air. The Eugene Police Department helped control traffic as cars crawled respectfully behind the marchers.

While they were united in their purpose, people identified different reasons for marching.

"I was sexually assaulted at some point in my life," University graduate Kayla Emmons said. "I found (the march) empowering."

Emmons said events like Take Back the Night help to raise awareness and give people the freedom to speak out.

Event Coordinator Erin Dury said she was happy with the turnout and hoped it helped to get the message out.

"It shows survivor support," she said. "It shows that we're not going to stand for (sexual assault)."

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Dell founder holds nationwide webcast

Michael Dell emphasizes computer recycling to an online audience, which includes University students

By Steven Neuman
News Reporter

Dell Computers founder Michael Dell spoke about the importance of recycling computers during an Internet teleconference with students

around the country Monday.

Dell said the proper disposal of computers is especially imperative at a time when computers, which often contain toxic materials, have become a disposable and affordable commodity.

"One of the things we want to do both internally and externally was to create a branding campaign," Dell said. "Really because this is an education process to get people to understand what the issues around computer recycling are."

David Wood, the executive director of GrassRoots Recycling Network and Computer Take-Back Campaign's organizing director, said Dell's decision to speak out marked a change in the business attitude. Both the GrassRoots Recycling Network and the Computer Take-Back Campaign sponsored and participated in the webcast.

The take back campaign targeted Dell and

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City plans to reduce one-way streets

Plans to convert one-way sections of several downtown streets should receive approval from the City Council May 24

By Steven Neuman
News Reporter

The city of Eugene hopes to remove some of downtown's one-way streets starting this summer, erasing 50 years of street planning that has left the area's downtown region "inhospitable" to shoppers and businesses, according to Transportation Planning Engineer Chris Henry.

The city's first big move, recommended by the Eugene Public Works Department, would convert the one-way section between 13th Avenue and 18th Avenue of Willamette Street into a two-way street.

The plans, which will receive final approval from the Eugene City Council on May 24, also include the eventual removal of one-way street sections of Lawrence Street, Lincoln Street, Charnelton Street and possibly Eighth Avenue. The changes to Eighth Avenue would be part of an effort to strengthen the link between the downtown area and the planned site of the future federal courthouse and civic center on East Eighth Avenue and Ferry Street.

Henry said the idea to change the streets originated in a 1993 Central Area Transportation Study that made recommendations for the elimination of some old one-way streets.

"They weren't necessarily mistakes," Henry said. "The one-way street grid system is very good at moving traffic rapidly. What we're looking for is smaller roads and calmer traffic to make a different kind of atmosphere, one that is more conducive to people living and working in downtown."

He added that while one-way streets are good at moving people around, they are not "community-friendly."

Henry said the changes will spawn new traffic flow that will benefit the downtown economy by providing better access to businesses and slowing traffic to speeds that will encourage pedestrians and shoppers.

"We're actually trying to go back to a different time," he said.

Nicole Campbell, who works at Cravings Catering at 1530 Willamette St. and within range of the two-way conversion, said the switch might be a temporary inconvenience that will be worth it in the long run.

"It will certainly be a little bit harder to tell people how to get here because the street won't be one-way, but it's odd to have five blocks of one-way and the rest of the street two-way," she said. "I've seen

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