

Halloween power outage



Photos courtesy Rick Melhorn
A tree fell near the intersection of Trail Avenue and Harmony Drive around 6:30 p.m. last Saturday, Halloween night, causing a power outage just as trick-or-treating was in full swing. Melanie Moir with Portland General Electric said the downed tree caused the outage for a feeder in Keizer, knocking out power for approximately 2,200 customers. Moir said power was restored by 10 p.m. Rick Melhorn said the tree took down lines and a power pole and blocked the entire street.

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West Coast. But with major interstates everywhere, no state can say they are not on a major pipeline.”

CRU members spend plenty of time building relationships and trust with people doing and dealing drugs.

“More people are admitting to us they are on heroin,” Trump said. “None have been arrested and there are no stats. It shows us heroin is the dominant thing.”

Young acknowledged the “delicate balance” between getting information and enforcing laws.

“Drugs are something that need to be enforced, but there is also a treatment issue,” Young said. “We have to have people trust us enough to tell us they are an addict and to say it is pervasive. We have to be open to talk to people and let them know they’re not being arrested just for telling us they are on drugs.”

Trump said the balance includes working closely with the Marion County District Attorney’s office.

“Our job is to enforce the law, but we see the people and we are sympathetic,” Trump said. “As much as possible, we involve the DA. We try to get the users treatment, to get them out of the cycle of drug use. The system is overburdened. There’s not enough room to lock up all of the drug users. If there is the demand for drugs, there will be the supply. If we take someone down (for delivery of drugs), someone else will pop up.”

That line of thinking echoes what KPD Detective

Chris Nelson, who was on a Drug Enforcement Agency task force for seven years, told the *Keizertimes* last week.

“When I was first in law enforcement, I thought the solution was enforcement,” Nelson said. “Over the years on the task force, I quickly realized we’re taking out one (drug) trafficking organization and another new one takes its place. I learned quickly that if you have the demand for drugs, it will find its way into our community.

“If we want to reduce crime, we need to reduce the demand for illicit drugs,” he added. “Enforcement and incarceration alone will not solve the problem. Continuing drug court programs, expanding treatment facilities and education by everyone in society certainly seems like the logical approach.”

Young said there is indeed drug court for those who are arrested, with options and resources also explained such as treatment and rehab facilities. But he points to a caveat.

“If you’re an adult, are you ready to stop? You can tell me ‘I’m a drug user,’ but if you don’t say ‘I’m done with this,’ you are not ready for treatment,” Young said. “Until they’re ready, they’re not going to go.”

Trump said that’s where the legal system can come in sometimes, in effect trying to scare people into recognizing the need for a change.

“They won’t change on their own,” Trump said. “It’s atypical that someone says, ‘I’m ready to change.’ They’ll finally admit to using, but will deny they have a problem. It has happened all too often.”

In that case, Young said options become limited.

“When they tell you flat out they’re not ready to quit, there’s not a lot you can do about it except go through the criminal charges,” Young said. “It’s like anything, you can’t force someone to want something. As long as you have people who are content using drugs, you can’t force them to want to do rehab. They can be clean for a while, but until they want (to change), it won’t work.”

Young said sometimes those who’ve been to court multiple times on drug charges simply don’t want to go through the process again.

“Sometimes it’s a fear thing,” Young said. “If we can help them with that motivation, that’s something we’re willing to do to get people out of the cycle.”

Trump said the need to get away from reality is a common factor.

“A lot of times we chat with people and ask what got them addicted,” he said. “They will say they want to escape.”

Young said stressors like bad relationships and traumatic events often play a key role.

“Until we figure what causes people to distance themselves from reality, we will never solve the drug problem,” Young said. “As long as people are into altering their reality, there will be drug use. Something happened like they broke up with their girlfriend or they had a kid. Things got so stressful, they had to use the drugs again.”

Once the user is on heroin, it’s tough to get off.

“Heroin is a physically addicting drug,” Young said. “They need it every single day. Their body will be sick if they don’t have heroin. It’s agonizing. They describe it as the feeling that they almost died and now they have to get more of it.”

Trump said the physical withdrawals from heroin can be devastating and are like a severe case of the flu.

As such, Young said the user has to find ways to support the habit, using whatever means.

“It causes the issue of the body needing it every day, so they need to support that,”

Young said. “Usually they’re not keeping a job, so they have to find a way to acquire money. Often at home that means stealing from family members, whether taking a bill out of mom’s purse or pawning a DVD player. Then you notice more and more things missing around the house. Then parents start to distrust their kids and you have a volatile family situation.”

Once that cycle starts, it’s hard to reverse.

“It leads to a breakdown of family at that point, which perpetuates more drug use,” Trump said. “It’s a downward spiral effect.”

Young said youth in particular get trapped by heroin.

“People are telling us this 17 to 25 age group is riddled with heroin users,” Young said. “From what we’ve been seeing, that is the main group doing this.”

Lt. Andrew Copeland with the KPD said heroin overdose deaths are piling up.

“Heroin kills people, at an alarming rate,” Copeland said. “Especially the young people, who have the potential and their whole life in front of them.”

So what can families do, both those with current addicts and ones wanting to know what signs to watch out for in the future?

“The biggest thing is be involved,” Young said. “Users are distancing themselves with the drug. When you see them spending time alone, bring them into the family unit again, especially with juveniles. They are using that as a replacement for something lacking, which is often family. You have to make sure you’re all together mentally.

“If there are parents out there with middle school or high school kids, if those children have social media accounts and they’re not actively monitoring them, the parents are lacking,” he added. “That’s where they are meeting their friends and being totally honest. You need to make sure your kids know they can tell you anything, even if it is ‘I’m doing drugs.’ Parents sometimes don’t want to see it, don’t want to think it’s possible. So they inadvertently set up walls about what is appropriate or not. It’s very crucial for kids to know they can talk about anything.”

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