

Man arrested after taking car

By CRAIG MURPHY
Of the Keizertimes

A 28-year-old Keizer man was arrested after a carjacking incident Wednesday morning.

Shortly before 11 a.m. March 9, Keizer Police Department officers were dispatched to a carjacking incident at the Keizer Quality Suites on Wittenberg Lane. According to a release from the Keizer Police Department, the 51-year-old male victim told police he had been pushed down by a man in his 20s, who then stole his blue 2015 Subaru Outback from the south parking lot of the hotel.

The victim suffered minor abrasions when he fell to the ground. The suspect was reported to be armed with a crowbar, or some similar tool. The suspect was later identified as Ryan Otero.

While officers searched the area, Sgt. Trevor Wenning spotted the Subaru going eastbound on Dearborn Avenue near Verda Lane. Wenning followed Otero as he drove south on Verda Lane.

Once other officers joined Wenning, a high risk traffic stop was initiated on Verda just north of the Salem Parkway. Otero pulled the vehicle over.

"The suspect was initially stopped where he pulled over because that was when the first officer (Wenning) had a cover officer (Jay Prall) catch up to him to assist with the high risk traffic stop," KPD deputy chief Jeff Kuhns said. "We don't want officers trying to conduct high-risk traffic stops on their own if a cover officer is nearby. In this case, Sgt. Wenning simply followed the stolen vehicle until officer Prall caught up to them and then he initiated the high-risk traffic stop."

Initially Otero complied with verbal commands and exited the car with his hands up, but moments later he became defiant, reentering the vehicle and then exiting again with a crow bar. An officer deployed his Taser twice, but was ineffective both times in incapacitating Otero.

Kuhns said neither deployment reached Otero.

"The distance between the deploying officer and the suspect was too far," Kuhns said. "In our case the probes didn't even strike the suspect, from the best we can tell."

Kuhns noted other officers at the scene had their guns pointed at Otero since he posed "an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death" to officers once he armed himself with the crowbar.

"It's common for one officer to announce to the others he or she is going to deploy a less lethal option in an attempt to incapacitate a suspect, but other officers will maintain lethal cover on the suspect simultaneous to the deployment of less lethal," Kuhns said.

After the second Taser attempt, Otero threw the crowbar towards officers, got back into the Subaru and attempted to drive away. He was only able to drive about 50 yards before striking two police vehicles. There were no injuries, but all three vehicles sustained moderate damage and had to be towed away.

"We did not want him to get to the Salem Parkway fleeing from the officers because the traffic light was red for eastbound traffic," Kuhns said. "My experience tells me had the suspect made it to the Salem Parkway he probably would have disregarded the red traffic signal and proceeded through the intersection. Odds are his doing so would have resulted in a serious traffic crash because at this time of day the Salem Parkway is heavily traveled by motorists."

When Otero got back into the Subaru, two officers already in their vehicles and reacted.

"One of them immediately cut in front of the fleeing vehicle in an attempt to cut the suspect off," Kuhns said. "The suspect maneuvered around this police vehicle to avoid being cut off, but another officer was right behind and to the left

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Wood named finance director

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Tim Wood can take off the interim label.

Wood had been serving as interim Finance Director for Keizer since Susan Gahlsdorf retired from that position on Jan. 8. Wood had worked alongside Gahlsdorf for six years as assistant controller, while Gahlsdorf spent her last year working on a transition plan that included Wood being trained on her duties.

City Manager Chris Eppley said four finalists for the position were interviewed. In early March, Eppley announced Wood had earned the job. He mentioned the news again during the March 7 Keizer City Council meeting.

"Tim Wood has been filling in as acting finance director," Eppley said. "He is filling in no more. Tim is our new permanent finance director. We're glad to have him on board."

Eppley noted all four finalists were strong candidates.

"They were all very good," Eppley said. "Tim rose above them. Any of them would have

worked out well, but the decision was clear."

Mayor Cathy Clark was pleased with the level of applicants as well.

"We had a number of good candidates," she said. "This appointment is very good for Keizer indeed."

In other recent council business:

- Councilors approved new equipment for the Lacey Court water filter plant. The item was part of the consent calendar, but Clark pulled the item so she could ask about it.

"There's a lot of discussion around town about water quality," she said. "I wanted to see how this addresses that concern."

Bill Lawyer, Public Works director for Keizer, noted the plant hasn't been used.

"This one is not in service due to water problems," Lawyer said. "Hydrogen sulfites are the main issue. It's not harmful, but it is annoying. It's the rotten egg smell. There is manganese in the well. That creates some staining. We flush it every spring. It's a real dark

purple color. The plant hasn't been online most of its life because of the problems. We have found the solution, so we're putting it back online."

Eppley acknowledged complaints come in about the water.

"The two main complaints we get are smell and yellowing of whites or on the inside of the dishwasher," Eppley said.

"That is common for groundwater systems. There are two really simple ways to fix a lot of those issues. If you have braided plastic water lines, water will sit. Water reacts with the sulfites. Replace the line with a copper pipe line and it gets rid of the issue. It's a cheap and simple solution. Also, water softeners do a great job filtering out manganese. You can

do both things for less than \$200."

- Matt Lawyer was confirmed as the newest member of the Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. With the appointment, the Parks Board is back up to a full roster of nine members. Lawyer's first Parks Board meeting was last Tuesday, March 8.

- The process to fill the council seat vacated by Brandon Smith has been amended. Applications are still due March 28 at 5 p.m., but the special meeting for candidate presentations has been bumped up a week to Monday, April 4 at 6 p.m.

Councilors will vote that night, with the new person being sworn in at the April 18 council meeting.



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