

Lock up your bike to deter theft

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — If you think your bike will be safe left unlocked while you run inside for a few minutes, think again.

The city of Monmouth has 49 reported bike thefts so far this year, and thieves are targeting expensive models, said Chris Lynch, community services officer for Monmouth Police Department.

"So far this year, about \$26,000 in bikes have been taken," he said. "The average cost is \$682 per bike. People are losing a lot of money on these things."

And that doesn't include stolen parts, Lynch said.

"People are coming by, they see a well-locked bike, and they'll take the tires," he said. "We're still seeing victims of having the parts being taken."

Lynch has been tracking the problem since January, seeing spikes in February and September. So far, only two have been recovered.

Part of the problem is people leaving their bikes unlocked, but most of the thefts reported were locked up using cable locks, Lynch said.

"We've always recommended that people use the u-shaped, hardened steel locks," said Rebecca Chiles, public safety director at Western Oregon University, where most of the thefts have occurred according to Lynch. "They aren't indefensible, but



EMILY MENTZER/for the Itemizer-Observer
A student locks her bike at racks in front of the Werner University Center at Western Oregon University. Bikes are being stolen at an alarming rate.

they're harder. But the cable locks, you may as well have a piece of rope tied around it."

Lynch agrees. "They've got to use those u-bolt locks," he said. "People go out and buy a \$700 bike and put a \$20 cable lock on it, and they get their bike taken."

Chiles said some students bring bikes to campus and never use them.

"Typically at the end of the year, we'll get reports because they never went back to their bike all year, and it's been gone for a while," Chiles said. "So if you're not planning on using (your bike) on a regular basis, don't bring it. And don't

Register your bike

Public safety and Monmouth Police Department provides bike registration for free and takes serial numbers, photos and descriptions so that the bicycle can be easily identified to its owner.

To register a bike with Monmouth PD, go to the station located at 450 Pacific Highway N. between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and fill out a form.

Western Oregon University's public safety officers will help register a bike 24/7, Chiles said.

bring a thousand dollar bike up here."

Lynch said thieves know what bikes are worth and are leaving cheaper models behind.

If a bicycle is stolen, it is difficult to return it to its

owner if it is found. Lynch said many bikes look the same. The only way to be sure is to have your bike registered with Monmouth PD or with Western Oregon public safety for students.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Multiple calls keep police busy in FC

FALLS CITY — Polk County deputies were out in force in Falls City on the morning of Oct. 27, but there was no big bust.

All the activity — which caught the attention of local residents — stemmed from calls that just happened to be in close proximity in time and location.

Polk County Sgt. Mark Garton said deputies responded to two calls on Sheldon Street at about the same time. One was a family dispute in which no one was arrested and the other was a theft investigation where no arrests took place.

A third call of a "suspicious person" came in around that time and, upon investigation, deputies arrested Leviticus B. Clifton on a failure to appear warrant. Clifton is also being held for Marion County after he walked away from a work group.

Garton said a second subject was arrested on an unrelated warrant.

Rules for Dallas food carts changed

DALLAS — If location is one of the keys to a successful business, then food carts in Dallas just received a leg up.

The city of Dallas has approved an ordinance allowing increasingly popular food carts to stay in one location for six months — or longer so long as they apply to renew their permits.

Rules previously applied to "itinerant merchants," which include food carts, limited businesses to staying in one location for only three months out of the year. That forced the carts to find a new place to set up and their customers to follow.

The new rules, approved in October, only apply to food carts, not other types of itinerant merchants, defined as those as selling from carts, trailers or other vehicles.

The fees for initial permits and renewals will remain at \$100.

Smoking rules will now include 'vaping'

DALLAS — Vaping, or using e-cigarettes, will now be treated like smoking through more traditional methods in Dallas after the city revised its smoking regulations.

The Dallas City Council unanimously passed an ordinance revising the city's code.

The new rules mean vaping wouldn't be allowed in work places, public gathering places or within 10 feet of entrances of such locations; within 25 feet of school facilities, public and school bus shelters or stops; and in all city parks, including the Rickreall Creek Trail, except for the designated area in Dallas City Park.

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