

## Did You Know . . .

By Chief Mathew Workman  
Vernonia Police Department



The Vernonia Police Department recently participated in the "3FLAGS Blitz" Safety Belt enforcement, February 5-18. The

VPD was able to do some enhanced safety enforcement as well as send Officer Conner to a Pre-Blitz training workshop in Eugene on January 10-11. The 3FLAGS program helps increase public awareness and compliance through high-visibility traffic enforcement.

Along with the traffic safety and safety belt use, the 3FLAGS program is focusing on Child Restraints and Child Passenger Safety. It is a docu-

mented fact that the right child restraint can reduce the chance of crash injury by 71 percent for infants, 54 percent for toddlers, and 59 percent for children in boosters. In Oregon, ODOT reported that 1,354 children under eight were injured and six were killed in motor vehicle crashes last year. Two out of five of these children were not using child restraints or they were improperly fitted. Look for more enhanced patrols

throughout the year.

As you can see by the blotter report, Vernonia is seeing an increase in the number of thefts, particularly metal thefts. This does not include the numerous thefts that have occurred just outside of Vernonia and reported to other agencies. The theft increase in Vernonia mirrors what is occurring around the rest of Columbia County and the entire Northwestern part of the country.

Predominately, the thefts are being done to support the illegal drug trade and drug use. Any item that has even the smallest amount of marketable metal is being stolen.

In Southern Oregon, a remote house had the aluminum siding stolen while the owner was away. Here in the Vernonia area, we are seeing wire, radiators, tools, and anything that can be scrapped for cash or

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