

Burglars hit 2 S. Tahoe Y businesses

South Lake Tahoe police officers are looking for the people who burglarized two businesses at the Y this week.

Cash was taken from the register at Bert's Café on Monday night. The next night two laptops were stolen from Barton University. While the businesses are across the street from each other on Emerald Bay Road, police Lt. Brian Williams told *Lake Tahoe News*, "We have no specific information which connects the two burglaries."

Williams offered the following advice to help prevent a business from being the victim of theft:

- Lock your business doors and windows. This sounds obvious, but this is often overlooked.
- Burglars frequently commit their crimes close to their own residence ... even if that may be a tent in a field. Business owners and employees should remain alert and observant to their surroundings; what is normal and what is not.
- Take note of suspicious persons or vehicles around the business, especially at opening and closing time.
- Take note of people wearing inappropriate clothing for the weather, such as heavy coats during warm weather.
- Be aware of people carrying duffel bags or similar items to collect and flee with stolen property.
- Be prepared to take brief mental descriptive notes about people and/or their vehicles.
- Equip your business with an alarm and video surveillance and periodically test this equipment to verify it is in proper

working order.

- Ensure employees are trained in how to operate any surveillance recording gear in order to quickly provide officers with video recordings of the suspect.
- Establish good relationships with neighboring businesses to help watch out for one another.
- Try to keep the inside of your business well lighted, with unobstructed windows so that a clear view from the street or parking will assist police officers to see inside as they patrol the area.
- Use of lighting and video recording gear is particularly helpful at all entrances and exits to the business.
- Some businesses find it beneficial to leave the cash register drawer open and visible from windows to deter a burglar.
- Keep cash at a minimum, and post notices in the doorway of this fact.
- Keep the telephone number of the police department near the phone. (911 for an emergency, 530.542.6100 for nonemergency.)
- Develop and train employees in a plan of what to do in case a burglary is discovered. This should include – alert authorities quickly, do not search through the business before police arrive because the suspect may be hiding inside, protect the crime scene by not disturbing evidence, including unintentionally contaminating any remaining scent at the scene which may enable a police canine an opportunity to track a suspect's path of escape, and position and identify yourself in such a way that responding officers will not mistake you for a possible suspect.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report