CYCLISTS TO PROTECT YOUR RIDE

Red Deer, Alta. – A recent string of bicycle thefts in Red Deer has RCMP reminding cyclists to secure their bike, or risk having it stolen.

"We're seeing a lot more bikes on the streets and trails this year because of COVID-19," said Cst. Derek Turner, Red Deer RCMP Community Policing. "It's a great way to stay active and a physically distant activity that can be done with friends and family, but more bikes on the street also means more potential targets for thieves."

RCMP typically see an increase in bike theft complaints in the spring and summer. However, in the last week alone, there were nearly a dozen reports of stolen bicycles in the city.

Last week, Red Deer RCMP laid charges against a 31-year-old man after he stole a bait bike in downtown Red Deer.

"Bait bikes are one tool we can use to deter theft and also catch thieves in the act," said Cpl. Dwayne Hanusich, Red Deer RCMP Downtown Unit. "Just like with bait cars, we park our bait bikes in visible areas and conduct surveillance on the bike to see if it will be stolen. If it is, we move in and arrest the thief."

RCMP recommend bicycle owners take steps to avoid becoming a victim of theft, including:

- Keeping it in a locked shed or garage when not using it.
- Securing it with one or more heavy-duty locks that are difficult to cut.
- Removing all accessories such any fitness tracking electronics, lights, and bells when not in use.
- Avoid parking it in the same place every day.
- Record your bike's serial number and register it online with 529 Garage.

It only takes a few minutes to register your bike and get a tamper-resistant decal that lets potential thieves know your bike is registered with 529 Garage. Registration is free, and if your bike is stolen you can send out an alert to the 529 Garage community to be on the lookout.

For more information about registering your bike, visit www.project529.com/reddeer or contact the Central Alberta Crime Prevention Centre at 403-986-9904.

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