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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Chico PD, Chico Chamber, & DCBA Release Retail Watch PSA's

May 27, 2019 CHICO, CA The Chico Police Department, Chico Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown Chico Business Association released a series of Retail Watch PSA's today. The PSA's encourage local retailers and the community to Prevent, Report, & Prosecute. The "Retail Watch" program was formed to convene retailers and the Chico Police Department to combat shoplifting in Chico.

The initiative began with a series of Retail Roundtable meetings hosted by the Chamber and DCBA for businesses and the Chico Police Department in December of 2017 and January of 2018. At these meetings, retailers expressed concerns about increasing theft and decreasing accountability. A feeling of helplessness prevailed, with losses pushing up local prices, stifling job growth, and impacting consumers. Larger retailers frequently employ Loss Prevention officers who take preventative measures to deter theft, but businesses of all sizes are often left reacting to the troubling increase of petty crime in Chico.

Chico Police Chief Michael O'Brien decided monthly meetings were in order to open regular lines of communications between the Chico PD and large and small retailers in Chico. With individual businesses reporting losses of up to \$250K/year from shoplifting alone, the Chief declared this issue a priority during his "Year of Accountability."

Chief O'Brien says, "Even businesses that are the hardest hit need encouragement to report these crimes and be willing to prosecute. We often see that a shoplifting charge, even for minor theft, can result in an arrest for felony warrants or other crime. A recent shoplifting arrest at Kohl's, following a Retail Roundtable meeting, is a perfect example of that happening. As Chief, I find shoplifting and other theft unacceptable in Chico and want to send a strong message that we as a community will no longer tolerate it."

Katy Thoma with the Chico Chamber says, "The importance of retailers and the Chico PD working together on this issue is the value of sharing information and learning best practices. This protects our retail workforce and property. It also keeps prices as low as possible for local consumers. We hope these PSA's encourage the local retail community to be diligent in preventing, reporting and prosecuting theft activity."

Melanie Bassett with the DCBA says, "Small retailers are often the most vulnerable to shoplifting – not having the loss prevention resources many bigger retailers have. Sometimes with only one person in the store running the cash register, a business has absolutely no means to protect itself from theft. We want small retailers to have the same access to the Chico PD and to tools and practices that are available. Plus, theft makes everyone uncomfortable and we need to stand together and say it's not acceptable in Chico."

Retail businesses of all sizes throughout Chico are encouraged to participate by calling the Chico Chamber at 530.891.5556 or visit www.chicochamber.com for meeting dates and times. Meetings are open to retail owners, managers, employees, and loss prevention officers. The Retail Watch Program falls into the category of "Safe Community" under the [Chico Community Vision](#). Our Community Vision is to make Chico the safest, most vibrant, premier city in the North State.

Presented by Chico Chamber Community Impact Partners:

Legacy: Allevity Employer Solutions, California Water Service, Golden Valley Bank, Orangetheory Fitness, Sierra Nevada Brewing Company

Visionary: Alliance for Workforce Development, Cali'four Foods, California State University, Chico, Chico Area Recreation & Parks Department, Comcast Business, Dutch Bros Coffee, Enloe Medical Center, Five Star Bank, Healthy Solutions Insurance Services, LRT Graphics, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, Recology Butte Colusa Counties, Slater & Son, Stratti, Tri Counties Bank, Transfer Flow, Inc., Waste Management

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