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Community Members & Business Owners Gather to Address Rising Property Crime in Missoula

Missoula, MT - May 20, 2024 - Last week, community leaders convened at Bretz RV & Marine to address the escalating issue of property crime in the area. The roundtable discussion, led by Missoula Chamber of Commerce CEO Mark Losh & Bretz RV & Marine President Brandon Bretz, brought together concerned citizens, business owners, law enforcement officials, and representatives from various organizations to share experiences, identify potential solutions, and chart a path forward.

Brandon Bretz shared his personal experiences of enduring multiple instances of stolen and damaged property, including three stolen trailers in recent years. Bretz highlighted the challenges faced by business owners, including the significant time and resources spent on security measures such as hiring personnel to patrol for breaches in fences.

The discussion also shed light on the broader impact of property crime on the community, with participants recounting instances of theft, vandalism, and public safety concerns. From homeless encampments leaving behind hazardous waste to shoplifting incidents escalating into felony offenses, the community voiced a shared sense of frustration and urgency for action.

One key theme that emerged from the discussion was the need for comprehensive and coordinated approaches to address the root causes of property crime. Suggestions ranged from increasing law enforcement capacity to exploring legislative changes that would provide businesses with more tools to combat crime effectively.

Matt Jennings, the new County Attorney for Missoula, emphasized the importance of striking a balance between compassion for those in need and holding individuals accountable for criminal behavior. He outlined efforts to adopt data-driven strategies aimed at reducing recidivism and protecting the community, while also acknowledging the challenges of engaging victims in the prosecution process.

Looking ahead, participants expressed a commitment to continued collaboration and advocacy to address the complex issue of property crime in Missoula. Plans were made to engage with elected officials, explore legislative options, and enhance resources for businesses affected by crime. The Chamber of Commerce pledged to serve as a hub for ongoing dialogue and action to address property crime in Missoula.

For more information or to get involved, please contact the Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce at info@missoulachamber.com.