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LOCAL

5 key takeaways from the public safety forum regarding Asian burglaries



Haleigh Kochanski

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Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

A series of burglaries since 2023 has targeted at least 22 homes belonging to Asian community members in Eugene.

Law enforcement officials believe the burglaries are the work of a sophisticated, organized crime ring operating across the country.

Seven suspects were arrested in connection with the burglaries, but all have posted bail, with some being detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Over 100 people packed the Korean Presbyterian Church at 1600 Taney St. in Eugene Oct. 23 for the city's second Asian American and Pacific Islander Public Safety Forum hosted by the Asian American Council of Oregon.

The meeting was held in response to [a series of burglaries](#) that have targeted at least 22 homes belonging to Asian community members in Eugene since 2023. One reported burglary also has occurred in greater Lane County, and at least four in Springfield. Police believe there could be more.

Panelists at the forum included Eugene Police Chief Chris Skinner, Springfield Police Chief Jami Resch, Lane County Sheriff Carl Wilkerson, Lane County

District Attorney Christopher Parosa, and Bias Crime Resource Prosecutor for the Oregon Department of Justice Gavin Bruce.

Other attendees included [several crime victims](#), Eugene Mayor Kaarin Knudson, Springfield Mayor Sean Van Gordon, several Lane County commissioners, several members of the Eugene City Council, and police commission members.

"This is not just an issue affecting Lane County. There are AAPI communities that are being affected in Beaverton, in Albany, in Deschutes County and all over the state that are being affected in multiple ways," Bruce said.

Here are some key takeaways from the meeting.

Burglary ring operates like a cartel, has no borders

Similar burglaries have occurred across the United States and in multiple jurisdictions in Oregon. Burglars monitor their victims at their homes or businesses to know exactly when they'll be away. They are known to use signal jammers so their actions aren't recorded by neighboring surveillance systems, disguise themselves as delivery drivers, gardeners or service workers, access homes through front doors, back doors, or even by cutting a hole into a home. They will steal anything from a safe housing private documents to money and jewelry, handbags and more.

"These are individuals who are ultimately not people known to us. They come into our community for a short period of time, and then they vanish," Parosa said.

Skinner highlighted the challenges of Eugene and Springfield being located on the I-5 corridor, which runs along the West Coast connecting major cities in

California, Washington, and Oregon. He said its proximity allows criminals to travel in and out of the community swiftly.

"It's an easy ingress, egress. It's easy to duck into our town and victimize our community and easily and quickly escape. We're seeing this up and down the West Coast; we're seeing this nationwide," Skinner said.

Resch highlighted the importance of local police departments working collaboratively to stop crime and investigate the burglaries.

"While the three of us have jurisdictions, the people who are committing these crimes do not have jurisdictions," Resch said.

The latest burglary occurred Oct. 21 in southwest Eugene, according to the Eugene Police Department. Law enforcement officials said the burglary bore similar patterns to the organized crime group, which is believed to be operated under a cartel-type business model.

"I honestly believe that this is a very organized ring of individuals, well-financed, that are coming together somewhere in our country and then being sent out into our communities all over the country to perpetrate these crimes," Skinner said.

'Skyline Seven' suspects detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

On Oct. 9, the Eugene Police Department [arrested seven people](#) at an Airbnb on Skyline Boulevard in connection with a resurgence of burglaries targeting the homes of Asian business owners in Eugene and Salem.

Seven people, ranging in age from 24 to 44, were arrested and each charged with first-degree burglary and first-degree conspiracy to commit burglary.

The suspects were identified as Steven Alexander Quiroga-Solano, 27, Robinson Camacho-Rodriguez, 31, William Steven Rodriguez, 26, Denison Martinez, 24, Jesson Quintero, 27, Jhon Alexander Quintero, 44, and Jhon Quintero, 24.

Every suspect has posted \$10,000 bail, 10% of their actual bail amount of \$100,000.

According to Oregon law, an inmate only needs to pay 10% of their total bail to be released. If the defendant then fails to appear at their next scheduled court date, the court may order the forfeiture of the money and require the defendant to be responsible for the full bail amount.

"I share the frustration as prosecutors around the state do frequently," Parosa said. "The only time where I ultimately have the ability to affect whether or not the court's going to release someone or not is if I can prove to the court in an independent hearing that the person is an immediate threat to a victim in the community or themselves. We don't have any evidence in these cases to be able to challenge the release decisions that are being made by pretrial services in the court."

At least two of the suspects were released from the Lane County Jail on Oct. 15 and [immediately detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#) officials, Wilkerson told The Register-Guard. It is unclear which suspects were detained and whether more of them were apprehended by immigration officials upon their release from custody.

In response to a Register-Guard media inquiry, Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman Tricia McLaughlin stated ICE apprehended four Columbian nationals Oct. 15 "who have collectively committed approximately TWENTY home invasions and burglaries over the past several months."

Parosa said he does not maintain any relationship or communication with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or Immigration and Customs Enforcement due to Oregon's Sanctuary Promise Law. He said his office is working with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Federal Bureau of Investigation on a coordinated effort to address this issue in the community.

"When they nab our people, they go into federal custody, we lose control over those people," Parosa told The Register-Guard. "If ICE takes one of our people, their goal is to deport that person. That's the last thing we want. We want to keep them here for the purpose of ultimately holding them accountable for the crime."

Parosa said federal courts could direct ICE detainees back to the circuit courts to stand trial, but described the process as a nightmare.

"We're going to try to get those people back to ultimately prosecute them, I'm just not in control of the outcome on that and it is very frustrating," Parosa said.

Are the burglaries considered bias crimes?

Jensina Hawkins, a member of the Asian American Council of Oregon, who co-moderated the forum with Jenny Jonak, asked why the burglaries are not considered hate crimes.

Bruce highlighted issues with the state's bias crime law in relation to property, which describes the crime as "tampering or interfering with property," and not theft. Though he noted that bias crimes relating to property have a maximum sentence of just 1 year in jail.

"We're now looking at whether there are legislative fixes so that we can include theft based on an individual's protected characteristics, and whether that

qualifies as a bias crime," Buce said. "We've been in discussion with the legislature and the senators here tonight on how we can make those changes."

Parosa said convictions for many defendants without known criminal records could be sentenced to probation, rather than prison time.

"What we're hoping to see is the potential for maybe aggravating, some kind of an allegation of aggravating factor that we can file with these charges that would automatically qualify these people for a potential prison sentence as opposed to probation," Parosa said.

Community members most concerned about safety and prevention

Many community members during the "question and answer" portion of the panel expressed concerns about safety, having their personal belongings recovered, and more.

The crowd was triple the size of the previous public safety forum held in January.

Skinner encouraged community members to be "good neighbors" to help prevent crime, while Resch warned community members to watch what they post to social media and position their security cameras to capture useful images.

According to The Asian American Council of Oregon, community members can protect themselves by:

Being conscious of what you post on social media. Don't post publicly about an out-of-town vacation or valuables that you keep at your home.

Consider restricting the audience for social media posts to friends and family.

Protect your home. Ring doorbell cameras, security cameras, security

signs, automatic security lighting, secure door and window locks, and other home security measures. If you store valuables at home, use a safe large enough that someone cannot carry them off. Dogs are also a great way to deter criminals!

Neighborhood associations. Get to know your neighbors and let each other know when something looks out of the ordinary. Report suspicious activity.

Keep your home address private, particularly if you're a business owner or public figure. There are services that you can use to have your home address kept private on the internet.

Some burglaries go unreported

Law enforcement officials believe many burglaries have gone unreported, either because community members feel ashamed, afraid they may be targeted again, or that the police department won't do anything to help their case.

"Please hear us, we want you reporting these crimes," Parosa said. "We're going to have better statistical information if you report crimes that are happening to you, and I would feel peril if, ultimately, crimes were happening out in our community and people are failing to report them either because of shame or some other reason. We want to know about them, we want to help you out."

Board members with the Asian American Council of Oregon, who moderated the discussion with panelists, said the organization will support community members seeking help in reporting crimes.

Haleigh Kochanski is a breaking news and public safety reporter for The Register-Guard. You may reach her at HKochanski@gannett.com.

