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NU on Wheels rolls into 7-day service

BY JILL ZEMAN

It's been a year since NU on Wheels made its debut.

Organizers didn't know how the free-ride program would go over when it began.

But a year later, they say it's a rousing success.

So much so, they've gone from operating the service 12 hours a week to 12 hours a day, seven days a week.

The service will now be offered from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. every day, said Molly Schmitz, student coordinator and co-founder of the program.

Last year the cabs ran from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursday through

Saturday.

The hours have increased because the program's operations shifted from the University Health Center to the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska in July, she said.

The program has enough money to run the extended hours now that it is funded by student fees.

ASUN allocated student fees to the program last spring, she said.

The group also received a \$3,000 donation from Gamma Phi Beta sorority to help pay for the cab service, she said.

Brett Stohs, NU on Wheels co-founder, said moving the program from the University Health Center to

ASUN will benefit the program because more students can take leadership positions.

New students will continually take over the program once the original founders graduate.

Both Schmitz and Stohs said they were working to expand NU on Wheels' reputation to more than just a "tipsy taxi."

The service can be used for any student who needs a ride, regardless of his or her situation, she said.

Last year the program gave 4,102 passengers a free ride home — an average of 71 rides per weekend, she said.

This year the group has budgeted for 90 rides for Thursday through

Saturday, in addition to the rides it will offer throughout the week, she said.

Bob Schroeder, alcohol and drug program coordinator for the University Health Center, said he thought NU on Wheels is making a difference in reducing drinking and driving incidents at UNL.

The program's popularity came as a pleasant surprise, he said.

"It doesn't offend drinkers," he said. "In fact, it's welcomed by drinkers."

Students can access the service by calling 475-RIDE and presenting their student ID to the cab driver, Schmitz said.

City, university work to slow theft from cars

■ Police want to teach students how to protect their valuables locked in cars in campus parking lots.

BY JOSH FUNK

Police plan to use education and enforcement to decrease the number of thefts from cars this fall. But car owners can have the greatest impact on these thefts by hiding or removing valuable property and locking their doors, said Lincoln Police Capt. Jon Sundermeier.

An increase in the number of thefts from cars this year prompted Lincoln Police to create a task force for the problem.

"The numbers indicate that the problem is quite large," said Sundermeier, who heads the task force made up of police, and city and county attorneys.

During the first six months of the year, more than \$1 million in property was stolen in 2,242 thefts reported to Lincoln Police. About \$200,000 damage also was caused in the thefts.

On campus, theft is the most common crime, and larcenies from cars account for a significant portion of those thefts. In 1999, there were 427 thefts, according to University Police statistics.

This past weekend there were six larcenies on campus with more than \$1,200 in stolen property reported.

The rate of thefts from cars is expected to increase with the arrival of university students who have more expensive stereos and leave CDs and book bags in their cars.

The thefts are more common in areas with many cars and few people such as university, high school and apartment parking lots.

Sundermeier said that most of the time thefts from cars are crimes of opportunity.

"If the thief doesn't see it, he won't break the window," Sundermeier said.

University Police Assistant Chief Mylo Bushing said UNL parking lots are patrolled every night and during the day, but students can help by reporting suspicious activity.

Cars that continue to circle parking lots past open spaces and people looking into cars or trying to open doors should be reported.

The university and city police plan focused enforcement projects, but community education will be key to both their efforts.

Lincoln Police are leaving flyers on cars they find unlocked or with valuable property in plain sight with advice for car owners.

University Police plan to provide similar advice to students through residence hall newsletters.

Police say there are a few simple steps car owners can take to protect their property:

- Lock all doors.
- If possible, remove any valuable property from the car before leaving or at least make sure that valuables are out of sight.
- If the car stereo has a detachable face, take it with you.

PREVENTING THEFT

■ Lock all doors.

■ If possible, remove any valuable property from the car before leaving or at least make sure valuables are out of sight.

■ If the car stereo has a detachable face, take it with you.

■ Record serial numbers from the car stereo, cellular phone and other items and mark everything else, especially CDs, with permanent ink.

New pledges of Chi Omega Sorority take a breather Monday between Bid Day activities. The day wrapped up four days of formal rush at UNL.



Josh Wolfe/DN

Bid Day ends nerve-shaking week of anticipation

"It's just a celebration of what we've been doing in the past four days."

Lindsey Haller
freshman English major who rushed

■ Hundreds who participated in the formal rush were invited to join houses Monday.

BY TONY MOSES

An event known as Bid Day ended nearly a week of nervous anticipation for prospective sorority members.

On Monday, hundreds of women who participated in this year's formal rush found out which house they will call their home for the next few years.

The women have been touring sororities since Wednesday. On Saturday, they picked their top three choices in a process called "preferencing."

On Monday, the women went to the Nebraska Union at 5 p.m. to find

out if they were matched with a sorority.

They were then taken to their individual houses to meet other members. Each house had a different activity for the girls.

"It's just a celebration of what we've been doing in the past four days," said Lindsey Haller, a freshman English major and prospective sorority member.

Haller said she was nervous during rush but was excited for Bid Day.

"It's been so much fun," she said. Bid Day was also a day of celebration for current sorority members.

Cara Medley, rush chairwoman for Alpha Xi Delta Sorority, said she was excited to meet the girls.

She said she hoped the event would allow each sorority to become better acquainted with its new

pledges.

Medley, a senior advertising major, said in the next four weeks, current members will try to familiarize new pledges with their sorority.

Medley said each pledge is given a "sister."

The sister will be responsible for assimilating each woman into the sorority.

After the first week, the prospective members will have the option to join their sorority.

"They could be unsure, and we don't have the (induction) ceremony until next Monday," Medley said.

If the prospective members choose not to be inducted, they can still join later in the year, Medley said.

"They still have the option of deciding the greek system isn't for them," she said.

Nebraska Bookstore welcomes student IDs

UNL students will be assigned separate accounts from their centralized university bills

BY MARGARET BEHM

That piece of plastic with your picture on it recently became more useful.

Students can now use their UNL student IDs for charge accounts at the Nebraska Bookstore, 1300 Q St.

Students' having credit will not only help the store but will help students, too, said Stan Vala, general manager at Nebraska Bookstore.

"Because we didn't have credit, we weren't getting as many students," he said. "Now we have an equal chance. And the advantage is that students have two places to shop."

About 1,500 students have signed up since the

program started three weeks ago, Vala said.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln students who would like a credit account at the Nebraska Bookstore need to bring their student IDs with them, Vala said. They will also need to fill out an application.

Employees run a credit check, which takes about five minutes.

"We usually tell people to fill out the application and go do their shopping," he said. "We'll have their account open by the time they're done."

The students' credit check results determines what their credit limits will be. The maximum amount is \$500. The charges made on

the Nebraska Bookstore accounts will be billed separately from their university accounts.

There is no annual fee and no interest rate for the credit account. There is a \$10 late fee if the balance due is not paid on time.

James Main, assistant vice chancellor for business and finance, said he doesn't think the new program will affect the University Bookstore's profits.

Students' charge accounts are activated when their cards are scanned for the first time at the University Bookstore.

About 9,000 students out of the 16,000 who have activated their accounts regularly use their cards to charge at

the University Bookstore.

The new program allows students to put off paying for more stuff, but Vala said most students are charging within their limits.

"There's good and bad students," he said. "Some will abuse any credit they have; for others, credit (is) just a nice convenience."

Main said most students pay their bills at the University Bookstore on time. Students want to avoid the fines, holds and other consequences that occur for not paying the bills.

Having the new accounts will help students build their credit histories, Vala said.

Please see BOOKSTORE on 3



DAVID CLASEN/DN

Wes Rowe smokes a cigarette and watches the rain underneath a walkway by Sellsch Quadrangle on Monday morning. Students were welcomed back to school by a thunderstorm that cleared up before noon. For the rest of the week, students can expect a 30 percent chance of thunderstorms every day. But next week will be drier, with temperatures reaching up into the 90s.