

Crimes put spotlight on security at businesses

*Darren Meritz
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Security firms are encouraging businesses to practice sound security measures after a string of alleged crimes committed early Wednesday on commercial property.

Police said that about 6:45 a.m. Wednesday, a man was pushed and a robbery was attempted at the Sonic restaurant in the 3000 block of North Mesa. No money was taken, nor was a description of the assailant given, police spokesman Javier Sambrano said.

In addition, at 3:30 a.m. Wednesday, a suspect who was taken into custody made a threat to an individual with a knife and is thought to have robbed a man at his apartment, which was reported at the Albertsons at 7022 N. Mesa, Sambrano said.

In the Lower Valley, police said, a Good Time Store in the 9800 block of Socorro Road was robbed about 3:30 a.m. Wednesday by a man wielding a knife.

Some retail business operators say they've championed a safe environment for employees and customers as a means to protect consumers and employees.

"Our position is this: In the event of a robbery or holdup at one of our stores, merchandise can be replaced," said Troy Calhoun, executive vice president of Howdy's Food Marts. "We have a moral obligation to our employees and our customers to try and provide the safest shopping environment as we can."

Michael Mendek, operations manager of Southwest Sonitrol, a firm that has specialized in security technology in El Paso for 20 years, recommends that businesses invest in security alarm systems, which range in price from as little as \$500 to upwards of \$2,500.

Security alarms range in sophistication, including systems that can record video and audio and even allow security personnel to listen in on a business if they suspect something fishy, Mendek said.

"I wouldn't be in this business if I didn't believe not only in my product but in the service we provide," Mendek said.

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