

## **Hoquiam Bike Rodeo Teaches Bike Safety, No Cattle Involved**

### **Local News**

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Posted on : June 16, 2011 at 10:28 am



HOQUIAM, Wash. - Police conducted a bike rodeo at Central Elementary in Hoquiam yesterday. Police Chief Jeff Meyers said 4th and 5th graders brought their bikes and helmets to school, and a 75-cone bike course was setup for the kids, learning about bike safety. Meyers said they are hoping to make it an annual event - just before summer, and reminded Hoquiam residents that if you're under 18, you need to wear a helmet on a bicycle in Hoquiam.



On Wednesday June 15, 2011, the Hoquiam Police Department, in conjunction with Central Elementary School, hosted a "Bike Rodeo" during school hours on campus. The department sponsored the Bike Rodeo to promote bicycle safety and awareness- especially to emphasize the importance of bike helmets. Hoquiam Municipal Code 7.20.040 requires all children under the age of 18 to wear a bicycle helmet. This is a parental responsibility law and could subject a parent to a \$95 fine. After a car versus child bicycle collision on April 13, 2011, the principal of Central Elementary, Traci Sandstrom, discussed educational strategies with Chief Myers in order to get the message about bike safety out to kids. Although the department had sponsored a Bike Rodeo in the past, it was not well attended because of schedule conflicts and poor weather. Central Elementary decided to bring the Bike Rodeo onto campus and incorporate it into their field day and BBQ for the end of the school year. Students brought their bikes and helmets to school for the rodeo. Students who did not have a bike helmet due to economic need were provided one for free. Funds for these helmets came from generous donations from local businesses and citizens.



Three of the department's bike patrol trained officers as well as our Explorers and CRIME WATCH volunteers led students through several courses set up on the paved and grass surfaces of the playfield. Students were instructed on balance, using hand signals, obeying traffic signs, wearing helmets and general bike safety practices. In addition to the courses, bike safety materials were distributed by Susan Bradbury of the Grays Harbor Traffic Safety Task Force. "Buzz"; the traffic safety bee and "McGruff"; the crime dog were also present to visit with the students. After completing the course, students flocked to an information booth presented by Grays Harbor E911. Dispatcher Carrie Robson provided information and hand-outs on how to report emergencies. Over 200 students participated in the event and were treated with ice cream and sweets. The program was well received and a timely message about bike safety as students get out for the summer and start to ride their bikes in the upcoming good weather. The goal of the event is to have no other child hurt in a bicycle related incident; bike helmets and bike safety education go a long way to this end. The event was so popular that the department hopes to conduct it annually at Central Elementary school for all 4th and 5th grade Hoquiam classes.