

Granite City business owner offering reward for vehicle thief

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GRANITE CITY - Mike Autonovich, the owner of Mike's Auto Sales in Granite City, is offering a reward to anyone coming through with information leading to an arrest or the recovery of items stolen from his business.

Two weeks ago, Autonovich said his business was burglarized by a man with a pry bar wearing a mask made popular by *Scream* movie franchise. The man, who Autonovich described as having a skinny build, was able to gain entry into the shop using a pry bar to open the main entrance door. Autonovich said the man tried for nearly an hour to open that door before it gave. He spent even longer on a large overhead door to no avail.

Once inside, Autonovich said the thief was able to steal keys to more than 70 vehicles on the lot, a DeWalt cordless screw drill with lithium battery, a DeWalt impact driver, a Rescue 1800 "jumpbox" for use on dead batteries, a 1973 Honda XR-75 dirt bike and a 2005 Dodge Durango, which is charcoal gray in color with a red pinstripe and missing rear hubcap.

Autonovich said there is a reward for anyone who can bring him information on the suspect or items lost.

"What that reward is depends on what is returned," he said. "If someone brings me back all those missing sets of keys, I would give them about \$500."

Those keys will cost Autonovich as much as \$100 per set to replace. The stolen tools add to about \$350, the jumpbox is \$200, the dirt bike is worth around \$500 and the Durango is valued at \$3,500. Those prices are not taking into consideration the nearly \$6,000 in damages done by the suspect to gain entry into the building.

"I've never been broken into before," Autonovich said. "I felt pretty secure with the security cameras. We've since added an alarm system. Lesson learned, I guess. I'm sure that guy will try to come back in the future."

Overall, the man was able to raid the premises for as long as four hours. Despite having an abundance of cameras in place, the mask worn by the suspect prevented Autonovich from having a good description of his appearance.

Despite that, Autonovich is hoping someone knows something.

Anyone with information on this burglary is invited to call Autonovich personally at (618) 779-7964.