

Protect Your Investment with the Bike Registry

By JEN RASMUSSEN

The FBI estimates that over 1.5 million bikes are stolen in the United States every year. Only about one-third of bicycle thefts are reported to the police. For bicycling enthusiasts everywhere, protecting that two-wheeled investment is a top priority.

After having five bicycles stolen in nine years, Arizona resident Bryan Hance created his own solution. On March 8, 2005, Hance launched www.stolenbicycleregistry.com, with his Trek 4900 as the first registered missing bicycle.

The site lets visitors search for stolen bicycles by city, state, zip code or brand, as well as register stolen bikes. Many owners offer rewards if their bicycles are found.

Hance's site differs from other bicycle registries in two ways. First, unlike the National Bike Registry, which is designed for law enforcement use only, anyone from citizens to bike shop owners to police can search the database.



Founder Bryan Hance

Second, after entering contact information, anyone can search for stolen bicycles by full serial number. This search engine is equipped with an auto-notify feature, so that if someone enters a serial number that matches a stolen bike, the owner is notified.

As soon as Hance's site reaches its goal of 500 registered missing bicycle, he plans to unveil new features. Besides adding a bulk registry for bicycle shop owners and police officers, he is working on a feature that will allow people to search the database of serial numbers via cell phone. "Say someone goes to a swap meet and there's a guy selling bikes that are obviously stolen," Hance says. "That person runs that bike number on the sly via their cell phone. It comes back stolen with the owner's contact info."

Hance's website depends on the cooperation of law enforcement, bicycle resellers and citizens.

"I want to give people the tools to help fight the problem," he says.



Hance is hopeful that as his site continues to grow, some of the 1.5 million stolen bicycles will be returned to their owners.

For more info and to register your bike go to www.stolenbicycleregistry.com. Photo courtesy of stolenbicycleregistry.com.