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School Bus Tires Punctured

Rio Rancho District Reviewing Security

By Elaine D. Briseno Journal Staff Writer

Rio Rancho school district officials have asked for a report today on security measures at the school bus yard in Rio Rancho after vandals punctured tires on two dozen buses, the second incident in the past week.

The district ordered a twohour delay for all schools Monday morning, including the 10 elementaries where students were reporting for their first day of classes.

Police were called about 5:45 a.m. Monday by Durham School Services, the district's bus contractor, which reported someone had punctured tires on 24 school buses, 14 of which are used on regular routes, according to Rio Rancho police spokesman John Francis. The other 10 were either spares or old buses that were for sale.

Francis said the department was following up on two leads. He said it is not known if the vandals were juveniles.

It is not the first time culprits have vandalized buses at the lot, which is on Idalia, west of Unser. In April, someone let the air out of 129 tires on 73 buses and last week, a vandal or vandals broke into the lot and slashed every single seat on two buses.

Francis said the department is looking into the possibility that the incidents are related.

Bob Clevenger, Durham's general manager at the Rio Rancho site, said the only form of security at this point is a chain-link fence topped by barbed wire. He said after the incident in April, the company hired a security guard to be on the lot after business hours. The guard is no longer there. Clevenger said the company is considering once again hiring a security guard.

"We considered cameras after the last incident (in April)," he said. "The reason we stayed away from that is because you cannot identify someone on them — they are not effective."

The lot is somewhat isolated. There are houses nearby but the front of the lot faces wide open mesa.

Clevenger said one of his shop guys discovered the buses Monday morning. It cost the company \$10,000 to purchase new tires to get the buses up and running.





RICHARD PIPES/JOURNAL Workers change tires Monday on school buses at the bus yard off Idalia west of Unser. Vandals punctured tires on 24 buses.