

RCMP



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

SERVING THE POLICE COMMUNITY SINCE 1939

GAZETTE

**2017 MARCOM
PLATINUM
AWARD WINNER**



VOL. 80, NO. 3, 2018

EYES ON THE ROAD

WHY SPEED, SMARTPHONES AND SOBRIETY
ARE ON EVERY OFFICER'S RADAR

**DON'T
DRIVE HIGH**
TRAINING OFFICERS FOR NEW
IMPAIRED DRIVING LAWS P. 7

**BAD DRIVERS
BEWARE**
POLICE TEAM PURSUES
PROHIBITED MOTORISTS P. 12

**LOOKING
FOR LEADS**
COLD-CASE INVESTIGATOR
TURNS TO SOCIAL MEDIA P. 26

RCMP - GRC . GC . CA



Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Canada

RCMP



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

A UNIFORM WITH
YOUR NAME ON IT
IS WAITING FOR YOU



TRAVEL AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

You will begin your career by working in Canada and may have the opportunity to work abroad in Foreign Missions, or in specializations ranging from Forensics to Cybercrime Intelligence.



rcmpcareers.ca



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Canada



9

COVER SECTION

- 9 New police training for updated drug-impaired driving laws
- 12 Manitoba RCMP patrol rural gravel roads
- 13 Integrated traffic team makes B.C. roads safer
- 14 Police team pursues prohibited motorists
- 15 Panel Discussion: What keeps riders safe on trails and waterways?
- 18 Q & A: Officer shares top road-safety tips
- 19 Police urge drivers to slow down, move over
- 20 Collision reconstructionists help explain accidents
- 21 Motorcycle unit offers operators flexibility
- 22 Police and traffic staff keep Surrey streets safer
- 23 Mobile road safety units target impaired drivers



12

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Editorial message
- 5 Q & A with Commr. Brenda Lucki
- 7 News Notes
- 24 Just the Facts: Gangs
- 25 Detachment profile: Rural Côte-Nord polices Quebec's coast
- 26 Emerging trends: Immigrants join RCMP to give back
- 27 Ask an Expert: Cold-case investigator turns to social media
- 28 Last Page: Therapy dogs come to Kelowna detachment



13



ON THE COVER:

From congested urban highways to remote gravel roads, the RCMP uses technology, enforcement blitzes and awareness campaigns to help keep motorists and pedestrians safe.

Photo: Martine Chénier, RCMP



28



SIGN OF THE TIMES

Martine Chénier, RCMP



On Sunday mornings when I'm out running along the gravel roads in my rural community, I often notice fresh beer cans in the ditches. Ugliness aside, their presence in such a remote place can mean only one thing: impaired drivers have been this way.

In this issue on road safety, we look at the pervasive problem of alcohol- and drug-impaired drivers, distracted motorists and speeders, and what tools and techniques police use to stop them.

To begin, the RCMP and other police agencies have started preparing for the changes to Canada's drug-impaired driving laws by offering new and updated training. Amelia Thatcher explains in detail how the new courses teach police officers to identify the signs of drug and alcohol impairment and get drivers tested if warranted.

The second step is enforcement and awareness. Thatcher speaks to an RCMP traffic services unit in Manitoba that targets the back roads. The results of their rural enforcement campaign snagged a shocking number of drivers who were violating basic traffic laws. One of the officers involved says she simply "follows the beer cans" to know where to wait for impaired drivers.

But impairment isn't the only hazard. Paul Northcott spent several days with the Integrated Road Safety Unit in Surrey, B.C. The team focuses its efforts on all dangerous drivers, from speeders to smartphone users.

The techniques they use allow them to get up close and spot the telltale downward gaze of distracted motorists.

Northcott also writes about traffic speciality units such as the Prohibited Driver Enforcement Team, which catches repeat dangerous drivers who are illegally behind the wheel. He also features the work of collision reconstructionists as well as the RCMP's Motorcycle Traffic Enforcement Unit, whose operators on two wheels can easily manoeuvre through B.C.'s congested highways.

For officers enforcing Canada's roadways, danger prevails. Aside from drivers who willfully break the laws are those who don't reduce their speed and change lanes when police officers and their vehicles are stopped on the side of the road. As one traffic officer points out, slowing down and moving over takes only seconds and could save a life. Officer and driver awareness are key.

Finally in this issue, you can read seasonal driving tips from an RCMP traffic veteran, learn about mobile road-safety units and the role they play in supporting enforcement and awareness initiatives, and find out in our panel discussion what policing approaches work best for off-road vehicle safety.

Summer is here, and the roadways are busy. Keep your eyes forward, and follow those cans. ■

— Katherine Aldred

PUBLISHER: Kevin Fowler

EDITOR: Katherine Aldred

WRITERS: Paul Northcott, Amelia Thatcher, Patricia Vasylichuk

WEB PUBLISHER: Richard Vieira

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Jennifer Wale

TRANSLATION: RCMP Translation Services

PRINTING: St. Joseph Communications

The *Gazette* (ISSN 1196-6513) is published in English and French by the National Communication Services of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Ottawa. The views expressed in any material published in the magazine or in its online version are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Cover design and contents are copyrighted and no part of this publication may be reproduced without written consent. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement 40064068. The *Gazette* is published four (4) times a year and is issued free of charge on a limited basis to accredited police forces and agencies within the criminal justice system. Personal subscriptions are not available.

The *Gazette* welcomes contributions, letters, articles and comments in either official language. We reserve the right to edit for length, content and clarity. © 2018 RCMP.

HOW TO REACH US:

RCMP *Gazette*
73 Leikin Drive,
M8 Building, 1st Floor, Room 801
Ottawa, ON K1A 0R2
CANADA

Phone: 613-843-4570
E-mail: gazette@rcmp-grc.gc.ca
Internet: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/gazette

STAY CONNECTED WITH THE RCMP



Visit our website:
www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca



Follow us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/rcmpgrc



Follow us on Twitter:
[@rcmpgrcpolice](https://twitter.com/rcmpgrcpolice) [#rcmpgazette](https://twitter.com/rcmpgazette)



Watch us on YouTube:
www.youtube.com/rcmpgrcpolice

'MY OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE BACK TO MY ORGANIZATION'

COMMISSIONER BRENDA LUCKI OUTLINES HER VISION FOR THE RCMP

Serge Gouin, RCMP



Commr. Brenda Lucki says she wants employees to be accountable for themselves and others, and to be proud of the RCMP.

Commissioner Brenda Lucki's career has taken her from drug investigations in Granby, Quebec, to a United Nations Protection Force mission in the former Yugoslavia. She has trained peacekeepers and instructed at Depot, the RCMP's police academy, and held numerous operations roles in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta before being named the commanding officer of Depot. Commr. Lucki sat with Gazette editor Katherine Aldred to talk about her vision for the organization and what she considers her best role yet.

WHAT LED YOU TO APPLY FOR THE JOB OF COMMISSIONER?

Well, I've always been attracted to jobs where I can evoke positive change and it's followed me in my career. I honestly thought when I was the commanding officer at Depot, I'd been given the greatest gift.

And I was proven wrong because now I actually have the greatest gift of all. And I think I've been so lucky throughout my career and the RCMP has given me so much. This is now my opportunity to give back to my organization.

IN YOUR FIRST ADDRESS, YOU PLEDGED TO MODERNIZE THE RCMP. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU?

I divide it into two things: people and communities. For me, to modernize, I have to ensure we have enough resources and we have the right resources to do the job.

We have to ensure our people are fairly compensated, we have to make sure our employees are healthy both physically and mentally, we have to keep Canadians safe and we have to build the trust within our communities and with Indigenous peoples. That's how we need to modernize.

WITH A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES FACING THE ORGANIZATION, WHAT'S YOUR PLAN TO ADDRESS THEM?

I'm sort of the glass is half-full kind of gal. So I don't consider them challenges but

rather they're opportunities. And I think we can't rush into things. If we did reach a point where we had some issues, it didn't happen overnight and it's not going to get fixed overnight.

It's like when you gain weight, you don't gain weight overnight so you're not going to lose it overnight. But you need to take each issue one at a time and see how they connect with others, and get the input of all the employees. Because I want everybody to own anything that we do because I'm that type of leader. I'm a very consultative leader.

SPEAKING OF LEADERSHIP, WHAT TYPE OF LEADER DO YOU WANT TO BE?

I want to be relatable. I want to be authentic. I want to be credible, caring, innovative and creative. Unafraid to be vulnerable — I think that's really important as a leader. Like I said earlier, I'm a consultative type of leader.

I don't need to have all the answers



because I have great people who are going to help me but I need to not be afraid to ask the questions. That's the type of leader I'd like to be.

THERE ARE SOME PRESSING ISSUES ON THE MINDS OF RCMP MEMBERS, INCLUDING PAY AND UNIONIZATION. HOW DO YOU INTEND TO ADVANCE THEM?

I really do look forward to working on the issues of vacancies, pay and benefits with our new bargaining agents. They'll be active advocates for our members and employees.

There's processes for that but I think it's going to be a positive step because I think it'll give us a stronger voice for our organization. And I really do believe that members and employees deserve fair compensation for the work they do.

WHAT'S YOUR APPROACH TO COMMUNICATING WITH EMPLOYEES ABOUT IMPORTANT ISSUES AND ALSO HEARING THEIR CONCERNS?

It's always a challenge because we're such a huge organization. But I plan to get out

to the provinces as much as possible and do a lot of travelling. I prefer face to face. I think somehow I have to modernize my communications. It's a new world.

WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF ADVICE THAT YOU'RE RECEIVED AS A POLICE OFFICER? HOW WILL YOU APPLY THAT IN YOUR ROLE AS COMMISSIONER?

There are four things I told every RCMP graduate, the new constables. First of all, make every community better than it was when you got there, be kind and take care of one another, take care of yourself mentally, physically and spiritually, and above all, have fun. So I plan to apply that philosophy to my role.

ARE YOU HAVING FUN YET?

I am actually, but it's pretty early!

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE ALL EMPLOYEES TO KNOW AS YOU BEGIN TO LEAD THIS ORGANIZATION?

We are a great organization and we shouldn't forget that. We do many, many things very well. And we are a great orga-

nization because of all the awesome work that each and every employee does every single day.

I want every employee, first of all, to remain accountable to themselves. But I want them to have the courage of conviction to be accountable for others. And I want them to own their RCMP and be proud of their RCMP.

IN YOUR FIRST BROADCAST, YOU SAID 'ONE EMPLOYEE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE, BUT EVERY EMPLOYEE SHOULD TRY.' WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

We can all make little bits of difference but it's not the fact that you make a difference, it's the fact that you put yourself out there. You go one step further to be that person who makes that change. You make that effort.

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE ORGANIZATION ONE YEAR FROM NOW?

I want my organization to be more agile and more capable. More inclusive, more respectful and more tolerant. And I want us to be more trusted by the communities we serve. ■



Commr. Brenda Lucki joined RCMP employees on a mental health walk in Ottawa last May. She says a key aspect of modernizing the RCMP is ensuring employees are healthy, both physically and mentally.

Martine Chénier, RCMP



VIDEOS SUPPORT VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN WHITEHORSE

By Amelia Thatcher

A new video series is raising awareness about the supports available to victims of violence in Whitehorse, Yukon. The three-part video series provides information about the criminal justice system, and outlines what health and social services are available to victims.

"In a crisis situation, victims of sexualized assault need to know what their options are, whether they want to report it or not," says Collyn Lovelace, co-ordinator of the Yukon Women's Coalition. "Knowing what to expect is a huge part of making an informed choice."

The videos walk victims through the step-by-step process of reporting domestic violence and sexual assault to police. They also explain what the court process is, including what the courtroom looks like, and what questions they may be asked.

"There's generally a lot of uncertainty and angst as to what the process is, and we want to alleviate part of that concern and make them more comfortable during a difficult time," says Insp. Keith MacKinnon, officer in-charge of the Whitehorse RCMP detachment.

In 2015, Whitehorse RCMP and six Whitehorse women's groups signed the Together for Safety protocol, which works toward making the northern community safer for all women. The rate of domestic violence in the Yukon is 3.8 times the national average, according to Statistics Canada.

The video series was a product of the protocol. Community partners like Public Prosecution Service of Canada, Victim Services, Whitehorse General Hospital, the Kwanlin Dün Health Centre and Whitehorse RCMP all contributed to the videos.

"Our main message was that this can be quite a lengthy process," says Cst. Julia Fox, an officer at the Whitehorse detachment. "It's almost like a marathon, so we wanted to prepare people for that."

Fox says the Whitehorse RCMP also wanted to articulate that it's never a victim's fault, and officers will respect whatever choice a victim makes.

"It's about restoring peace of mind in a horrible situation to show victims that they have choice, rights and supports," says Fox. ■



Whitehorse RCMP, Yukon

Whitehorse RCMP officers show victims of violence what to expect when reporting an incident in a new video series created in collaboration with local women's groups.

SENIORS GET SAFETY SAVVY

By Patricia Vasylichuk

In an attempt to fight back against victimization of seniors in a small seaside city in British Columbia, White Rock RCMP has partnered with the community to offer a Savvy Seniors workshop.

"If we can prevent one person from being defrauded or having a crime committed against them then our efforts are worthwhile," says Julia Everett, a crime prevention co-ordinator with the detachment. "But we hope that those who attended can help spread the word to others who might be at risk."

Nearly 100 people, aged 55 plus, attended the workshop, held on the mornings of April 5 and 6. Topics presented included fraud prevention, brain health, emergency preparedness and driver re-testing.

Everett organized the first event in 2016 as a way to help empower the commu-



S/Sgt. Daryl Creighton spoke to seniors about safety earlier this spring at a Savvy Seniors workshop in White Rock, B.C.

Peter Williams, B.C. RCMP

nity's seniors to speak up when they would normally stay silent.

"As a senior, you're a valuable part of our community," she tells participants. "We want you to be safe and we're here to help you if you need us."

Fraud cases are getting increasingly

complex, especially in places like White Rock, where many people come to retire. According to Cst. Travis Anderson, an officer with the detachment's Community Policing Unit, fewer people are being victimized but the stakes have gotten higher.

"Fraudsters are going for more and more money these days," he says. "Before, if they got \$100 out of somebody they'd be happy, but now they're really going for large amounts of money."

In White Rock, romance and telemarketing scams make up the majority of fraud cases where seniors are targeted, says Anderson, who spoke at the workshop about personal safety.

In addition to having money, assets and good credit, many seniors makes an ideal target group because they are more likely to be polite and trusting, less tech-savvy, and statistically less likely to report when they have been victimized. ■



UNITS TARGET RURAL CRIME

By Paul Northcott

The RCMP in Alberta has created four regional teams to tackle the growing problem of rural crime. And a major element of its mandate is to develop and maintain partnerships with agencies that can help offenders end their law-breaking cycle.

RCMP Supt. John Bennett says over the last five years, property crime in rural areas has increased 20 per cent. That includes thefts and break and enters on homes, farms and industrial companies. He says it would be tough to speculate on causes, but the country's opioid crisis and Alberta's economic downturn are often cited as underlying factors.

As a result, Bennett has been building a strategy for the four teams, which earlier this

year received \$8 million from the Government of Alberta.

Known as Rural Crime-Reduction Units, Bennett says one of the team's mandates is to work with organizations such as Indigenous groups, health and mental health providers, addictions workers, probation and parole officials, housing workers and others to help offenders change their lives.

"There are so many agencies out there that can help people," he says. "So let's see what we can do to get that person who's been arrested into addictions counselling for example, and hopefully reduce the cycle of crime."

However, to get those people some help, first they have to be caught.

"If you look at the areas we police, we're

a very large area," says Insp. Greg Towler, who's responsible for the western region. "It's impossible for us to have police in every community and honestly, that's no secret to the criminals. They're sophisticated enough to exploit that."

To counter that reality, each of the four teams will have its own analyst who can work with officers to achieve the unit's other goals, which include identifying crime hotspots and using intelligence that will ultimately lead to targeted enforcement against prolific offenders.

"That's part of the team structure," says Towler. "Working with dedicated analysts who can co-ordinate, provide info on people to target, and deploy our resources to apprehend criminals." ■

MAPPING SOFTWARE HELPS LOCATE LOST HIKER

By Amelia Thatcher

When Cpl. Mike Wilson responded to a call for a lost hiker in rural Nova Scotia, he logged in to a little-known mapping tool called Pictometry.

The detailed mapping software is available to RCMP officers and employees in the province to provide geographic information during emergency calls or investigations.

Similar to Google Earth, pictometry uses aerial photos to form comprehensive maps. But instead of satellite images, the software company uses low-flying aircraft to take overhead and side-view photos of buildings and landscapes.

"It provides a really detailed picture of a whole area from different perspectives," says Wilson, who works at the Guysborough District RCMP, Canso office. "It's not just looking straight down, it's from the south, north, east, west — all directions."

After Wilson received the call for the missing man, he used the software to survey the area while he waited for Police Dog Services to arrive. With GPS data from the lost hiker's cellphone, Wilson marked the location and mapped out a direct route to the resident.



Nova Scotia RCMP

With Pictometry, police officers use aerial images to see landscapes and buildings, and calculate geographic measurements like distance, elevation and slope.

"It was dark and we were climbing over boulders and through swamp," he says. "It ended up taking us two and a half hours to travel about a kilometre because of the rugged landscape."

Finally, they reached the man. Wilson decided to use pictometry to help guide them out of the wilderness more quickly. Using the mapping imagery combined with the lost man's local knowledge of the property, they avoided the thickest areas of bush and made it out in a fraction of the time.

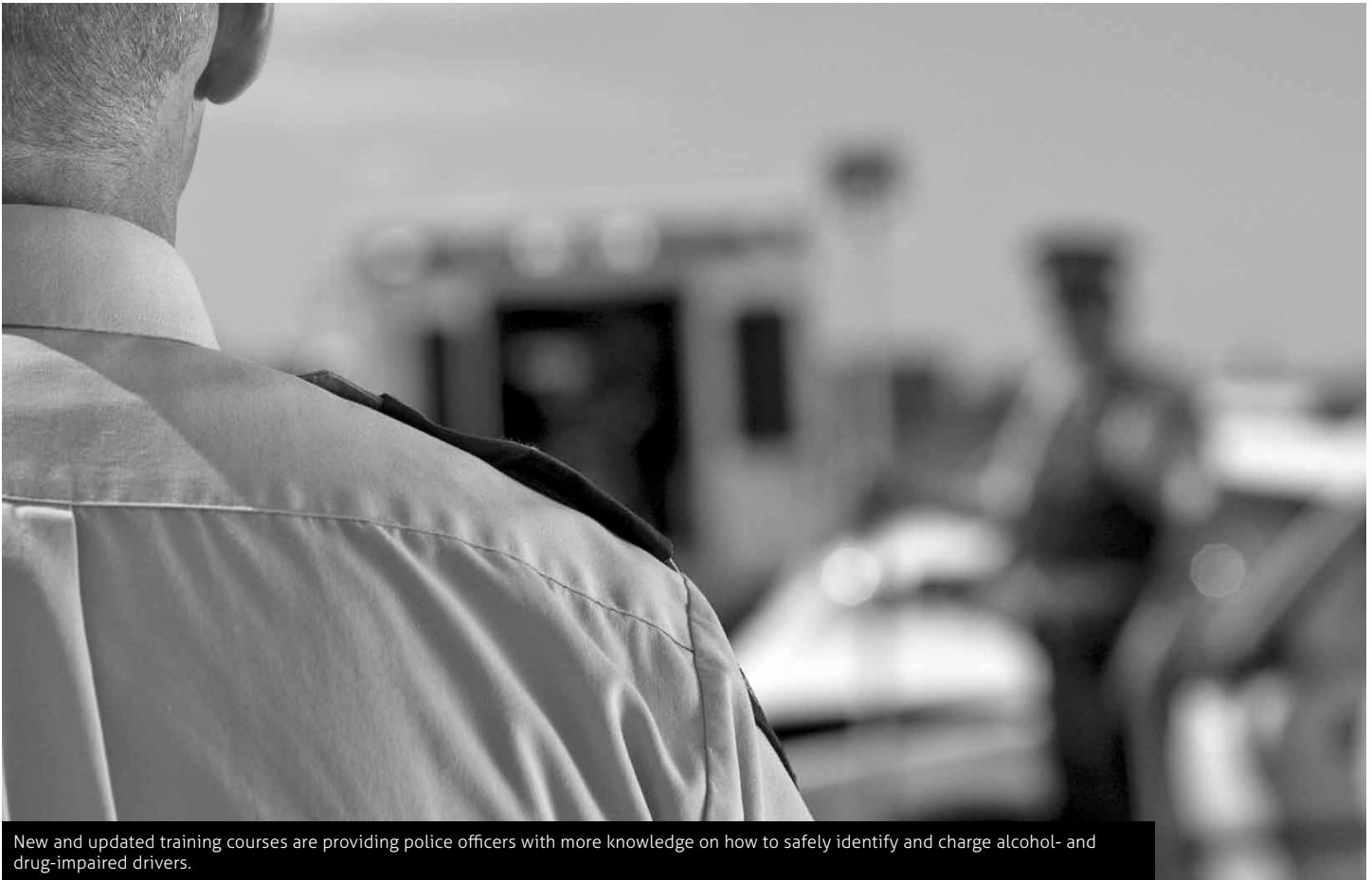
Along with assisting during emergencies, the software is also used to support investiga-

tions for tasks like surveillance. Natalie Bona, a criminal intelligence analyst with Nova Scotia RCMP, uses the tool regularly.

"It's particularly helpful in areas that aren't well known," she says. "It allows us to see what's around a location, like schools or playgrounds, no-parking zones, and entry and exit points to a residence."

She and Wilson say they rarely do research on a target without referencing pictometry.

"I use it for any investigation," says Wilson. "It's a valuable tool any RCMP officer should know how to use." ■



New and updated training courses are providing police officers with more knowledge on how to safely identify and charge alcohol- and drug-impaired drivers.

DON'T DRIVE HIGH

NEW POLICE TRAINING FOR UPDATED DRUG-IMPAIRED DRIVING LAWS

By Amelia Thatcher

The RCMP is spearheading new changes to police officer training to keep more drug-impaired drivers off Canada's roads.

Preparations for the changes began last spring, when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his plan to legalize recreational marijuana. Since then, the RCMP has collaborated with police agencies across the country to develop new training courses, and update many others.

"Impaired driving is a significant priority for the RCMP, it remains one of the leading causes of criminal death in Canada," says Cpl. Mark Skinner, an instructor in the Police Driving Unit at Depot, the RCMP's training academy. "It's a very needless, preventable crime and I expect we'll see more of it in the years to come."

The updates to police training come as two major legislations have made their way

through Parliament. The first law legalizes marijuana and the second implements new impaired driving laws.

The RCMP has been paying close attention to the second law in particular, which introduces three new impaired-driving offences and allows police officers to require drivers suspected with reasonable grounds of being under the influence of drugs to submit a blood sample for testing. The law also outlines regulations for an oral fluid device, which can test for the presence of drugs in a saliva sample.

In response to the changes, the RCMP has created four new courses for police officers, and updated one other.

"We want to prepare our officers as best as possible for when these changes happen," says Cpl. Dave Botham, one of the RCMP's leading experts on drug-impaired driving. "It's all about giving police training, experience and knowledge."

SOBRIETY TESTING

The RCMP currently has two major courses that teach officers how to detect drivers who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs: Standard Field Sobriety Tests (SFST) training and Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) training. They are both international training standards that the RCMP has adopted.

Cst. Ryan Wilson, an RCMP officer in Amherst, N.S., took SFST and DRE training this year. He says both courses are extremely useful for any officer doing roadside stops.

"We often get in the mindset that impaired only means alcohol, but impairment can also be any number of drugs," he says. "Before I was trained, I probably let a lot of people go. I didn't know what I was looking for."

While any police officer can arrest an impaired driver with reasonable grounds, SFST and DRE training can help officers better identify the signs of impairment.



Martine Chénier, RCMP

Blood pressure, pulse rate and pupil size can all be indicators of intoxication. Drug Recognition Expert training teaches police officers how to identify signs of drug impairment.

“They build on the foundation officers already have,” says Skinner, who’s also a DRE and SFST course instructor. “The more tools and knowledge an officer has, the better chance they have of recognizing something suspicious.”

Under the 2008 *Criminal Code*, if an officer suspects a driver may be impaired by drugs, they can ask the driver to take part in a series of physical co-ordination tests — the SFST.

Police are trained to administer the SFST in a four-day course. The course teaches officers how to identify impaired driving, how drugs and alcohol affect the body and what the different stages of an impaired driving investigation are.

“We talk about how some of the indicators of intoxication are basic things that an officer may not have considered before,” says Skinner. “Swerving, turning wide, and forgetting to turn headlights on are all major indicators.”

Officers also learn how to conduct three major sobriety tests on drivers: an eye-tracking test called the horizontal gaze nystagmus test, the walk-and-turn test and the one-leg-stand test. The culmination of these tests can help an officer decide if a driver is impaired by drugs and/or alcohol.

If a driver performs the SFST tests poorly, the officer may arrest the driver and

take them to a police station to perform a breath test for alcohol impairment, or a DRE evaluation for drug impairment. If a DRE forms the opinion that the driver is impaired by drugs, they can order the driver to submit a blood or urine sample.

DRE training is more extensive than SFST training. The 10-day course teaches officers a 12-step method to determine not only drug impairment, but what specific category of drug an individual is likely impaired by. Officers learn about anatomy and physiology, the effects of different drugs, and how to prepare for court.

As part of DRE training, officers must also complete a practical component. To pass training, they must conduct at least 12 DRE evaluations under the supervision of a trained DRE instructor, with a 75 per cent success rate. They must also pass an exam before earning their certification.

UNPRECEDENTED CHANGES

With the new laws, police agencies needed more than just SFST and DRE training for their officers. While DRE training is not changing, there are updates and add-ons to the SFST course, among other changes.

Although many of these updates are either fully developed or well underway, Geneviève Tremblay, director of the RCMP’s Learning and Development Services, says

creating courses before legislation was finalized was a challenge.

“It’s unprecedented, we’ve never had to do this before,” she says. “It’s like building a plane and flying it at the same time.”

To identify what additional training was necessary, the RCMP collaborated with Public Safety Canada, Justice Canada and subject matter experts at the Ontario Provincial Police, Winnipeg Police Service, Regina Police Service, École nationale de police du Québec, and select Crown counsels from across Canada.

They determined that several new courses were necessary, including an update to the drug-impaired driving segment of SFST training, an in-person and online refresher course for those officers who are already SFST-certified, a basic knowledge course on drug-impaired driving, and a new course to certify officers on using oral fluid devices.

“The new courses fill gaps,” says Tremblay. “They’re imparting knowledge to police officers so they can do their job more effectively.”

The courses began their rollout to police officers this spring.

TRAINING COURSES

The first change to training is an update to the drug-impaired driving segment of SFST



training, available to all officers enrolling in the SFST course from now on. The update places greater emphasis on the signs and behaviours of drug-impaired, and what drug paraphernalia may look like during a roadside stop. It's more practical and less theoretical than before, and takes eight hours to complete, in person.

"We're focusing more on cannabis impairment and what signs are commonly seen compared to alcohol impairment," says Skinner. "For example, with cannabis, an officer could note that the eyes are red, pupils dilated and the person has difficulty focusing or concentrating."

To keep officers up to date beyond SFST and DRE training, the RCMP has developed four new training courses.

The first and second new training options are for officers who are already SFST-certified. Two new review courses — one two-hour online course, and one four-hour in-person course — refresh an officer's knowledge on how to properly carry out the SFST tests.

"It's for officers who don't have the confidence or don't remember everything they learned during their initial certification," says Tremblay. "The two versions will give police services across the country more flexibility when it comes to delivering the course, and accounts for their respective

realities and needs."

Tremblay says the online version makes the course more accessible because it can reach a greater audience. It also gives officers the option to reference course material in the future.

The third new training option is a basic knowledge online course for all police officers — whether they have previous impaired driving training or not. It's currently in development and will be approximately two hours long.

It explains what to look for, when to call for backup or assistance and how to formulate grounds and suspicion," says Botham. "The more information you give officers, the better we're going to be able to identify these drivers."

The fourth new training component is a course for a new oral fluid screening device, which will be chosen and introduced later this year. The course is still under development.

"Our goal is to increase the use of SFST and DRE tests by having more officers equipped to carry them out," says Tremblay. "Providing these additional training opportunities will give police officers the ability to use these tests as required on the roadside."

For Wilson, the newly certified SFST and DRE officer in Nova Scotia, the training has been invaluable.

"I gained not only confidence, but the knowledge and information that makes me ask, 'is there more to what I'm seeing?' every time I pull someone over," he says. "If we have more trained members, we can get more impaired drivers off the roads and save lives."

THE SAME ENFORCEMENT

Although changes are happening, Botham emphasizes that the process for nabbing impaired drivers remains the same.

"It's still good-old-fashioned police work," he says. "Recognize the signs you see, and do something about it."

Botham says the steps police follow will be the same as before — from stopping a vehicle and recognizing the signs of impairment to obtaining reasonable grounds, followed by making an arrest and bringing them to a breath test or DRE test — or an oral fluids test or blood draw under the new laws.

The new courses simply provide more police officers with more knowledge on how to safely identify and charge impaired drivers.

"If you're impaired, don't drive. That's the main message we want to get across," says Botham. "Cannabis and other drugs impair a person's ability to drive a motor vehicle, just like alcohol." ■



The horizontal gaze nystagmus test is one of the Standard Field Sobriety Tests that police officers use to determine if a driver is impaired. In this test, an officer will typically move a pen horizontally and direct the driver to follow the pen with their eyes while keeping their head still.



BACK-ROAD PRESENCE

MANITOBA POLICE PATROL RURAL GRAVEL ROADS



Manitoba Traffic Services, RCMP

The RCMP partnered with Manitoba Public Insurance last year for an awareness and enforcement campaign on the province's rural gravel roads. The campaign will continue this summer.

By Amelia Thatcher

As she drives down the back roads of rural Manitoba, Cst. Luanne Gibb takes note of the number of beer cans and bottles scattered along the side of the road.

"That's generally how I decide where to go," says Gibb, an officer from the Westman RCMP Traffic Services Unit. "I follow the cans."

On Friday and Saturday nights, Gibb often sits in the dark on a road where she's noticed a particularly high volume of beer cans. She'll wait for a vehicle to come by, flick on her police lights and check to make sure the driver is sober and no one is breaking the law.

"The rural communities and gravel roads are not immune to fatalities or accidents caused by impaired driving," says Gibb. "My neighbour's son was killed. It hits close to home."

In Manitoba, an average of 14 people are killed, and nearly 500 injured, in crashes on gravel roads each year, according to data from Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI).

That's why Manitoba RCMP partnered with MPI last year for an awareness and enforcement campaign, targeting drivers on Manitoba's rural gravel roads.

"We were shocked with the results, we thought we'd barely see any drivers and here we were writing a ton of tickets and catching a ton of impaired drivers," says Sgt. Mark

Hume, the unit commander. "People are very unaccustomed to seeing cops on the back roads. We're slowly changing that."

HIDDEN EXPRESSWAYS

Traffic Services units normally concentrate their police presence on highways and major roads where the greatest volume of traffic is found.

When MPI first proposed the campaign targeting the back gravel roads, Hume was skeptical his team would find anything. The team's strategic analyst, Janette Rodewald, felt the same way.

"We were worried officers would just be driving around and wouldn't find anything," says Rodewald, who works for the RCMP's Traffic Services in Manitoba. "Because of the low traffic volume, we thought it would be like looking for a needle in a haystack."

To their surprise, the back-road patrols turned up a shocking number of drivers who were violating basic traffic laws.

Over the course of the four-month campaign, RCMP officers caught 31 impaired drivers, found 52 unregistered vehicles, and laid more than 1,000 charges for speeding, open alcohol, failing to stop at intersections, and failure to use seatbelts, among other offences.

"We've identified the major routes between many of these small towns — we call them expressways at night," says Hume. "It turns out many people take these routes

from one town to another to avoid police."

"WHY ARE YOU OUT HERE?"

In one roadside stop, Gibb says she pulled over a driver who was visibly surprised to see her. "He told me, 'I come this way because police are never on these roads, why are you out here?'" says Gibb.

As it turned out, the man was well over the legal limit for alcohol, and Gibb charged him with impaired driving.

While some drivers are annoyed by the heightened police presence on the rural roads, Gibb and Hume say most are extremely grateful.

"It brings residents a sense of security to know we're out there," says Hume. "And it's more than road safety. Our police presence also helps deter rural crime."

Since the campaign, Manitoba RCMP Traffic Services units have made back-road patrols a regular part of police shifts. Gibb says she's noticed people in the community talking about police being out on the gravel roads and rural areas, and they're changing their behaviour as a result.

"I've noticed more taxis, more parents and friends in pajamas travelling to pick somebody up, and people drinking less so they're not over the limit. I've also noticed a significant decrease in beer cans," says Gibb with a laugh. "We want you to have a good time, but at the end of the day, we want you to get home safely." ■



SPOTTING SPEEDERS AND SMARTPHONES

INTEGRATED TRAFFIC TEAM MAKES B.C. ROADS SAFER

By Paul Northcott

Spend a few days on the highways of British Columbia's Lower Mainland and you'll quickly learn a few things: they're always busy, often jammed and home base for a specialized team of traffic enforcement officers.

The region's roads carry speeders and distracted and impaired drivers just to name a few. And then there are motorists who simply won't slow down to give police some room when they need to get out of their vehicle.

One day in early March, Cst. Steve Shaw pulled over a speeding Acura MDX on the Trans-Canada Highway in Burnaby. Shaw got out of his unmarked Chevrolet Tahoe and approached the driver's side of the Acura as cars on the highway whizzed by. Granted, because the artery was so congested, it would have been difficult and probably unsafe for vehicles to completely pull over. But none reduced their speed as required by law.

"I'm used to it," says Shaw, a member of the Metro Vancouver Transit Police who joined the RCMP's Langley-based Lower Mainland District (LMD) Integrated Road Safety Unit (IRSU) in January. "I just wait for the right and safe time."

TRAFFIC TEAMWORK

The provincially funded IRSU consists of more than 40 traffic enforcement officers from seven different police departments on the Lower Mainland — Abbotsford, Delta, Vancouver, Port Moody, New Westminster, West Vancouver and Transit Police — plus the RCMP.

"We're dedicated to making our roads safer. We've been assigned to deliver, throughout the region, a specific service the government wants to target — traffic safety," says Sgt. Patrick Davies, operations non-commissioned officer of LMD IRSU.

The integrated unit means officers can work in multiple municipalities without worrying about jurisdictional issues.

"This diversity makes us more effective as best practices are adapted from a variety of sources," says Insp. Mark Baxter, LMD IRSU's line officer. "Also, wherever LMD

IRSU deploys [its officers], by default we have good, established contacts with the police of jurisdiction."

The roads and highways patrolled by police in B.C.'s Lower Mainland have ballooned over the decades to cope with the region's expanding population.

It's a development that RCMP veteran Cst. Kevin Bailey has witnessed first-hand.

"The behaviour of traffic has changed and everyone is in a rush," Bailey says, one March day before the start of his shift. "Traffic is like water, it looks for the shortest and fastest route. And with the city lifestyle, people feel they only have so much time and are constantly under the gun to get things done."

At the bottom of Burnaby's Royal Oak Avenue near an exit to Deer Lake Park, drivers' need for speed was on full display. Three IRSU members aimed their laser detectors at oncoming motorists and easily found speeders — some of whom feel they don't deserve a ticket.

"Sometimes it seems the drivers, who we know are speeding, don't want to accept accountability for their actions," says RCMP Cst. Sarah Brown.

DISTRACTED DRIVERS

Along with drivers with lead feet, smartphones are a perennial problem.

According to the RCMP, an average

of 78 people die in motor vehicle collisions each year in B.C. solely because the driver was distracted or not paying attention. That's why the IRSU targets distracted drivers.

And the method to catch them sometimes involves simple legwork.

At the corner of Kingsway and Willingdon in Burnaby, three IRSU members walked between lanes of traffic looking for distracted drivers, who are easily recognizable with their heads down looking at their phones.

Their efforts also didn't go unnoticed by the public. "Nice to see you here," says one passerby to Brown as he left the grocery store. "I walk by here all the time, there's lots of accidents."

One driver, when asked to pull into a nearby parking lot for reading her phone — said she was just looking at a map. She will accumulate driver points, which could affect her insurance costs, and she will be given a fine of at least \$368. And while getting dinged with a ticket may seem upsetting, most drivers seem to accept their fate.

"Most people are not angry with us, they're angry with themselves," says Cst. Marko Duran, one of the three-member team patrolling the area. "Also, 80 per cent of these folks are good people who just made a bad decision." ■

Martine Chénier, RCMP



Cst. Steve Shaw, a member of the Lower Mainland District Integrated Road Safety Unit, pulls over a Burnaby, B.C., motorist. She was fined for distracted driving.



BAD DRIVERS BEWARE

POLICE TEAM PURSUES PROHIBITED MOTORISTS

By Paul Northcott

There's a specialized team of police officers in British Columbia who dedicate themselves to catching prohibited drivers, including those with alcohol and drug violations or repeat unlicensed driving offences. But the team's work is more than about apprehending high-risk traffic offenders.

"There's a criminal element that makes it worthwhile, too," says acting Cpl. John Merryman, who leads the Lower Mainland District Integrated Road Safety Unit's (LMD/IRSU) Prohibited Driver Enforcement Team (PDET). "I think 90 per cent of the criminals out there are prohibited from driving."

RCMP Cst. Rob Claypool has pulled over many dangerous drivers as part of PDET, but he's also witnessed officers take down a prohibited driver, who upon subsequent investigation, had a loaded weapon in his car. Property crimes, drug trafficking and thefts are all conducted using vehicles, Claypool says.

"Drug dealers, because they get prohibited, does that mean they're going to stop driving to commit their crimes?" Claypool asks. "Well, the answer is no."

OFF TO A GOOD START

The team began as a pilot project in the fall of 2016.

Crime analysts provided two police officers with information about potential targets, addresses and vehicle descriptions. The pair also used an Automated Licence Plate Recognition (ALPR) device that reads plate numbers as vehicles pass.

The ALPR scanned more than 45,000 plate numbers during the trial. That information led to dozens of arrests, the laying of 41 criminal charges and the recovery of six stolen vehicles.

"When two members can bring in that much, I think upper management asked themselves what could five or six do," says Merryman, who's been with the Delta Police force for 14 years and working with the six-member PDET since it began operating in January 2017.

Now, Merryman and his PDET col-



Martine Chénier, RCMP

Acting Cpl. John Merryman monitors the Automated Licence Plate Recognition device, which can detect if passing motorists are under a prohibited driving order.

leagues can spend part of their 10-hour shifts parked in unmarked vehicles at various points of interest throughout British Columbia's Lower Mainland monitoring the ALPR. When the device flags a prohibited driver, the rest of the team who are stationed nearby, will be dispatched to make contact with the driver and apprehend the violator where warranted.

Last year, 476,529 licence plates were processed through the ALPR.

As well in 2017, the six-member team made 200 arrests that resulted in 137 *Criminal Code* charges, laid 202 prohibited driver charges under the province's *Motor Vehicle Act*, executed 48 arrest warrants and recovered 22 stolen vehicles.

TRACKING DRIVERS

The team can also call on the services of the RCMP's Air1 helicopter to locate high-risk suspects.

"We're basically like a patrol car in the sky," says Cst. Steve Burrige, Tactical Flight officer on the Air1 chopper, which provides an added layer of safety for the team and the public.

Decisions to pursue suspects in a police vehicle are rare, and being able to use a police helicopter can eliminate the need for a PDET road pursuit.

"The helicopter allows the member to back off so we can follow the target," says Burrige, who pointed out the video

evidence the helicopter records is crucial and often results in guilty pleas from suspects.

Back on the ground, Merryman works the ALPR's touch screen like a pro: filtering through pop-up displays waiting for the one that warrants his focused attention.

It makes a small "bing" as a consistent stream of cars move both ways on the two-lane highway.

The device stores data that's updated regularly from several sources, including the Government of British Columbia and the RCMP-operated Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC). CPIC is used to identify vehicles that are driven by prohibited drivers, are stolen or whose drivers may be operating the vehicle without a licence or insurance.

"When I sit here I'm just focused on the plate," Merryman says on a cool March day.

His effort intensifies when the ALPR alerts him that a passing vehicle is under a "service prohibition notice."

"We have to go," Merryman says as he whips his car around, turns on the lights and within seconds has the driver pulled over. The motorist has had five violations and an unsatisfactory driving record.

"She'll be prohibited as soon as I serve her this document," says Merryman, who admitted that although his work might not seem glamorous it is nonetheless significant. "We believe this is important for public safety and it's a road safety issue too." ■



Cpl. Christina Wilkins says danger awareness, wearing safety gear and following proper riding practices are all key to a safe ride.

WHAT BEST KEEPS RIDERS SAFE ON TRAILS AND WATERWAYS?

THE PANELLISTS

- Cpl. Christina Wilkins, Rural Enhanced Policing Unit, County of Grande Prairie, Alberta
- S/Sgt. Stephen MacQueen, Lunenburg County District, Nova Scotia
- Insp. Alexandre Laporte, Yellowknife detachment, Northwest Territories
- Cpl. Sheldon Clouter, Musquodoboit Harbour detachment, Nova Scotia
- Cpl. Janet LeBlanc, Northern Corridor Traffic Services, Amherst detachment, Nova Scotia
- Cpl. Cam Long, Police Dog Service & Division Search and Rescue co-ordinator, Yukon Territory

When it comes to safety, most Canadians know what they should be doing behind the wheel of a car: wearing a seatbelt, driving sober and keeping their eyes on the road. But riders don't always apply those same sensible rules to recreational vehicles. We asked six RCMP officers to share their best approaches — whether education, training or enforcement — to ensure the safe use of all-terrain vehicles, boats and snowmobiles.

CPL. CHRISTINA WILKINS

Specialized patrols of the trails and waterways are a big part of my duties as the

commander of the Enhanced Policing Unit. Along with my unit and partners from various agencies such as Fish and Wildlife and County Enforcement, I often scour the more remote areas of the county to conduct enforcement but, more importantly, to impart awareness and provide education on safe-riding and operating practices.

There are countless safety tips from government and other safety-minded agencies highlighting the basics of back country exploration via off-highway vehicle (OHV) or boat. The lists can become very detailed, and I recommend being prepared. However,

from a policing perspective, I keep our safety message simple: Don't drink and operate, and wear a helmet or life jacket.

While conducting boat patrols, I've noticed that many vessel operators and their passengers (upwards of 90 per cent) do not don a life jacket or personal flotation device (PFD) when boating. It's also not uncommon for occupants, including the operator, to be consuming alcohol. Drinking and driving laws are federally mandated by means of the *Criminal Code of Canada* and apply equally to the operation of vessels on waterways as they do to motor vehicles on highways.



Legislation surrounding use of life jackets is also federally regulated. The minimal requirement for vessel operators is to have one PFD on board for each occupant. While conducting routine vessel checks, many users do meet the minimum PFD criteria and are quick to haul out ill-maintained life jackets that aren't intended for anyone in particular but are just 'there' to check a box on the safety list.

I've seen first-hand how a boat can capsize within seconds, throwing its occupants into the water. There's no time to locate a proper-fitting PFD and securely fasten it to the body. Add in the potential hazard of mind-altering substances such as alcohol and the result can be fatal.

The same can also be said for OHV helmets. Long gone are the days of one-size-fits-most. When riding on vehicles such as quads and snowmobiles that can reach speeds of over 80 kilometres per hour, a correctly fitted helmet that's properly secured can make all the difference in the event of a collision.

What best keeps riders safe on the trails and waterways is danger awareness, together with the willingness to wear safety gear while applying safe-riding practices.

S/SGT. STEPHEN MACQUEEN

The South Shore of Nova Scotia is a major attraction for boating enthusiasts due to its picturesque landscape, the hundreds of islands that dot the coastline and natural beauty. Various communities take advantage of this tourism boom by hosting regattas, festivals and events, which are great for local businesses. However, the influx of boating increases potential issues from a public safety point of view.

A 2016 report prepared by the Lifesaving Society of Canada revealed that the Maritime provinces have a higher rate of drowning than the national average. Between 2009 and 2013, 138 drowning fatalities occurred in the Maritime provinces alone. Among the fatalities related to boating, in 80 per cent of the cases, the individual was not wearing a personal flotation device, 54 per cent were boating after dark, and 35 per cent involved alcohol consumption.

Lunenburg County District RCMP came up with a plan to be proactive in educating boaters on the laws, regulations and general safety tips. In conjunction with Nova



N.S. RCMP

Scotia RCMP Strategic Communications Unit, the district conducted boat patrols while using Twitter to send out boating information via tweets. Prior to the patrols, media outlets were advised of the initiative, which garnered much interest including interviews of our police officers.

Interacting with the public on the water and over social media was a very effective way to get our message out in a fun and interactive way. At the end of the day, we provided a wrap-up of some of the most common violations we observed during the patrols including how much the fines would have been had the offenders been charged.

I believe education is the No. 1 way we'll see a decrease of violations and ultimately see a reduction in lives lost at sea. After education, police visibility and enforcement is key, and Lunenburg County District commits to having its police boat on the water a minimum of three times a week during the months of June through September, to do just that.

INSP. ALEXANDRE LAPORTE

The Northwest Territories offers a unique and challenging landscape with easy access to lakes, rivers and isolated areas. Harsh conditions prevail in the winter, and 24-hour daylight impacts activities in the summer.

As our remote areas become more accessible to Canadians and tourists, the risk of outdoor incidents increases. In the Northwest Territories, public awareness

campaigns focusing on preparedness and survivability are one the best ways of informing the public about the inherent dangers of the wilderness, and the challenges of search-and-rescue operations.

As visibility continues to be our best outreach and deterrent, the RCMP in Yellowknife works with other partner agencies to conduct joint boat patrols on lakes and rivers. Three such patrols were successfully completed last summer.

The patrols work. In one instance, as the joint marine patrol was preparing to head out, the Iqaluit Coast Guard alerted the team about a vessel in distress on Great Slave Lake. During the search-and-rescue operation, the marine patrol helped the Auxiliary Coast Guard locate and then transport six children and two adults safely back to Yellowknife with the vessel in tow.

As employees from different agencies team up and share assets, it gives these joint units the ability to ensure compliance and enforcement of a multitude of federal and territorial acts, and minimize the resourcing pressures on each department compared to performing similar patrols without coordination.

In addition to being positively received by the public and community leaders, these patrols provide an opportunity for RCMP members to learn about the responsibilities and practices of other agencies, which enhances interoperability in a region where partnerships continue to be so valuable.

Personal safety remains an individual's



N.S. RCMP



Northwest Traffic Services in Cumberland County, N.S., conduct a check point on the trails during an organized ATV rally.

responsibility, but our inter-agency strategy and efforts help contribute to safe practices of recreational activities year round.

CPL. SHELDON CLOUTER

As a member of the RCMP and an avid all-terrain-vehicle (ATV) user, safety is always on my mind. I try to be proactive in my approach with other ATV users.

In Nova Scotia, we have some amazing ATV associations that have very well-run rallies. These rallies are an opportunity for ATV riders to come together and enjoy everything recreational vehicles can offer, from breathtaking views to an abundance of wildlife.

Our presence at these rallies is a great way to ensure the safety of all ATV riders and enforce the Nova Scotia *Off-highway Vehicles Act*, the *Highway Traffic Act* and the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

At rallies, we can also educate riders on all aspects of ATV safety and the applicable laws. It provides the RCMP with a network to engage our communities and the citizens who enjoy these recreational activities.

It also provides riders peace of mind knowing that the RCMP are on the trails, ready and equipped to deal with any situation that might arise.

CPL. JANET LEBLANC

Northwest Traffic Services' Amherst office is located at the Amherst RCMP detachment in Cumberland County, Nova Scotia.

The county has an extensive trail sys-

tem that people use year round. The trails are well used by hikers, horseback riders, ATVers, and snowmobilers. Our goal is for everyone to be able to enjoy and use these trails safely.

Our team has formed partnerships with the Department of Natural Resources and local clubs, such as the Cumberland County Rider ATV Club. We've met with its members and listened to their concerns about trail usage.

The RCMP conducts patrols of the local trails year round — with snowmobiles when the trails are snow covered and on ATVs the remaining part of the year.

We've also set up checkpoints on the trails during specific events. The focus is education alongside enforcement.

The majority of recreational vehicle users are law abiding and we've received positive feedback when we conduct our checks. Of course, there are a few who aren't law abiding, and they are not happy to see us. Drivers who have consumed alcohol have been charged with impaired driving. During one initiative, we seized a stolen ATV.

Another strategy that we've used is to set up checkpoints where a trail meets a roadway. When we do this, we don't even need to have a member on a recreational vehicle — they can simply use a police vehicle. This has proven successful.

Members enjoy getting out on the ATVs and snowmobiles and spending a day on the trails. Overall, the recreational vehicle users are appreciative of our efforts

and event organizers are always happy when we participate.

CPL. CAM LONG

For many Canadians, especially in rural communities, ATV riding, snowmobiling and boating are simply a way of life. For others, it's more for recreation.

Prior to an incident occurring, there are several different approaches for police officers to consider.

Providing a clear, consistent message regarding safety through education and public awareness can effectively reach the vast majority of recreational riders. Although messaging should be consistent, it should also come from a variety of sources. Establishing a unified approach with partners is key to getting the desired message out.

Any education or public awareness initiative focused on outdoor activities should include the "three Ts" (trip planning, training and taking the essentials). If riders and waterway users were truly committed to the three Ts, we would undoubtedly see fewer incidents.

Aside from consistent messaging, timely messaging is equally important. For example, just before a long weekend when traditionally there are more incidents or when the avalanche risk in the backcountry is high, you want to engage the public.

From my experience, the majority of incidents result from poor planning, lack of training, lack of exposure and people not staying within their limits.

Quality training is certainly the first step. Whether someone is a first-time operator or has extensive experience, everyone benefits from good training.

There's always a percentage of the population that requires enforcement — ATV riders, snowmobilers and boaters are no different. Effective enforcement remains a key element to overall safety.

Enforcement efforts also provide an opportunity to engage the public with positive reinforcement messaging. Take note and praise operators who are doing things the right way.

Finally, officers should lead by example. To maintain a professional image and the community's trust, police equipment should be well maintained, and operators should be well trained, properly equipped and competent at the task. ■

COVER

ROAD SAFETY



ADAPT YOUR DRIVING

OFFICER SHARES TOP ROAD SAFETY TIPS



Alex Vass, Codiac RCMP, New Brunswick

Sgt. André Pepin emphasizes driving for the road conditions and weather when talking about road safety.

Sgt. André Pepin is the co-ordinator of the RCMP's traffic services in New Brunswick. The 29-year RCMP veteran is trained as a collision reconstructionist to investigate car accidents, a radar technician to catch speeders, and is a certified breath technician to identify alcohol-impaired drivers. He spoke with Amelia Thatcher to share safe driving tips.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST DRIVING HAZARDS?

Nowadays, distracted driving is a big issue. Everyone has a cellphone, so we always look to see if drivers have an electronic device in their hands. Each province has different laws, but in New Brunswick you can't have electronic devices in your hands at all while driving, whether it's on or not. Impaired driving is also a big hazard — alcohol or drugs. With the legalization of marijuana, every province is looking at what can be done to increase our police presence on the roads.

WHAT'S YOUR MOST COMMON PIECE OF ADVICE?

We remind people that even if you're driving the speed limit, you can still be driving too fast for the road conditions. A lot of

people on highways will see that the limit is 100 km/h and they'll drive 100 km/h or more. But while the limit might be 100, if the road conditions are bad, it can be very dangerous to drive at that speed. Often people in pickup trucks or SUVs think they're safer, but if there's black ice and you have to hit the brakes, you won't be able to stop in time while staying on the road. So our message is always slow down and keep your distance. In bad weather, it could take you longer to stop. So always be alert and ready to stop.

WHAT ABOUT IN THE SUMMER?

In rain, it's the same thing, you can still drive too fast for the road conditions. If it's raining a lot, hydroplaning is dangerous. You have to slow down. You need to adapt your driving with the weather.

WHAT ABOUT DIFFERENT TYPES OF ROADS?

On rural roads or city roads where you have more residents, there's a greater chance of something coming out onto the road than on a four-lane highway. There can be lots of hidden driveways and side roads, as well as pedestrians and cyclists. But on the highways you also have to be alert and ready for

anything — especially wildlife and other drivers.

WHEN SHOULD DRIVERS STAY OFF THE ROADS?

It depends. If they're calling for lots of snow or high winds or tons of rain, stay home. Sometimes cities will even call snowplows off the roads if the weather is bad, and that means the roads aren't getting cleared. One general rule is if you can't see the road, or if the visibility is low, don't go out. Even for police, if there's a really bad snowstorm, I'll tell my officers to stay in the office unless they get a call. Don't risk your life and someone else's life when you don't have to be out on the roads.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD ANY CLOSE CALLS?

When I was a young officer, I was called out to respond to a collision involving a moose at the other side of my detachment area. I had lights and sirens on, and I was trying to get there quickly. It was dark, close to midnight, on a rural road through the woods. Suddenly, I had a moose jump out in front of me. It was so close I'm surprised I didn't hit it. I'm sure it kissed the side of my window when I went by. I wasn't going that fast, but it was faster than the speed limit because I was responding to an emergency call. It really made me realize the importance of slowing down. It's better to arrive late than not at all. ■

TOP 5 DRIVING TIPS

1. Slow down and drive for the road and weather conditions.
2. Don't drive after drinking or consuming drugs.
3. If you're tired, get off the road.
4. Don't use a cellphone or get distracted while behind the wheel.
5. Drive defensively — watch out for other people on the road.

SLOW DOWN, MOVE OVER

RCMP URGES DRIVERS TO WATCH OUT FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES

By Amelia Thatcher

Catching speeders is a standard part of the job for a traffic cop. But for RCMP Sgt. Mark Hume, it could have cost him his life.

During a traffic stop earlier this year, Hume pulled over a car for speeding. As he was processing the ticket, an SUV slowed down and moved over — following Manitoba's *Slow Down, Move Over* law, which protects workers on roads and highways. Another driver sped up and tried to move past the slowed vehicle, but lost control and pushed the SUV into the ditch.

"I could have easily been killed," says Hume, who works for Westman RCMP Traffic Services in Manitoba. "The driver was swerving all over the road and could have skidded the other way and rear-ended me."

While no one was seriously injured, the offending driver was slapped with a \$672 careless-driving fine.

For Hume, this is just one of many close calls he's had while working in traffic services. Since the *Move Over* legislation came into effect in Manitoba in 2011, he's been an outspoken advocate for the law.

"Those few feet on the side of the road are our workplace," he says. "I tell people to have consideration for others on the roadside, whether it's police, paramedics, a tow truck driver or someone with a flat tire."

LISTEN TO THE LAW

In Canada, *Slow Down, Move Over* laws were thrust into the spotlight in fall 2017, following the death of Cst. Francis Deschênes, a Nova Scotia RCMP officer. While on duty in New Brunswick, Deschênes stopped to help a driver change a tire when he was hit and killed by a passing vehicle.

"It caught everyone's attention," says Cpl. Ryan Lewis, who's in charge of New Brunswick RCMP's Tactical Traffic Enforcement Unit. "It goes to show you that road safety is everyone's business."

Slow Down, Move Over laws vary from province to province. In New Brunswick, drivers must slow down to a reasonable speed and move to another lane. Other provinces have specified speed limits that drivers must slow to.

In the wake of Deschênes' death, many RCMP traffic units across the country held education and enforcement initiatives aimed at increasing the public's awareness of the laws. Manitoba RCMP's Traffic Services was one of those units.

To see how many people were obeying the law, officers surveyed an area of Highway 59, south of Winnipeg. Over 15 minutes, they counted 107 cars that passed a parked police vehicle with flashing lights. While almost all cars moved over, only four slowed down to 60 km/h, as Manitoba's law dictates. And 16 vehicles passed going faster than the posted 100 km/h speed limit.

"A lot of people are ignorant," says Insp. Ed Moreland, the officer in charge of Manitoba Traffic Services. "But we had to crack down, because fatalities happen because of this."

Moreland's unit also held media events and ran a week-long enforcement blitz, pulling over drivers who weren't following the law on Manitoba roads.

SECONDS SAVE LIVES

For police in particular, the unpredictable nature of their job combined with cars

whizzing by at high speeds can be extremely dangerous.

"Keep in mind that a traffic stop is never just a traffic stop," says Lewis. "There are often underlying challenges, whether it's a domestic situation or mental health issues. People passing by have no idea what's going on."

Lewis says he's been in altercations on the roadside where fights break out and people end up in the ditch or on the road. That's when *Slow Down, Move Over* laws become important — to give police the space to do their job without getting injured.

To reduce their risk, many police officers park their vehicles wider than the car they are pulling over to give a pocket of space for the officer to walk in. Others use pylons to direct drivers into adjacent lanes.

For Moreland, close calls have happened so often that he began approaching cars from the passenger's side. But he says police shouldn't be the only ones making changes — it needs to be a shared responsibility with the public, too.

"We're not asking you to arrive late or cancel your trip. It's seconds," he says. "Are you willing to trade seconds of your life, for the life of someone else?" ■

Manitoba RCMP



Manitoba RCMP Traffic Services held education and awareness events for the public and media to better enforce *Slow Down, Move Over* legislation.

COVER

ROAD SAFETY



METICULOUS MEASUREMENTS

RECONSTRUCTIONISTS HELP EXPLAIN ACCIDENTS AND SAVE LIVES

By Paul Northcott

In the blink of an eye, fatal traffic accidents tragically end a life and kick start the work of highly trained police officers who seek to explain what happened.

Their findings often lead to improved road-and-highway safety measures that can ultimately save lives.

"We're the ones who make sense of it," says S/Sgt. Dave Jewers, unit commander of the RCMP's Lower Mainland Integrated Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Service (ICARS), which is based in Surrey, B.C.

The unit was formed in 2008 to integrate collision analysts and reconstructionists that were previously attached directly to detachments and traffic units. Its members investigate all vehicle collisions that result in serious injury or death.

POLICING AND SCIENCE

When the call comes in for service, ICARS members — who responded to 199 incidents in 2017 — arrive with 2D and 3D scanners and GPS technology that can produce high-quality crash-site images. Their work involves complex measurements and math calculations to determine what caused the accident. Speeds are determined through evidence such as tire marks and the distances that objects have been thrown after contact.

"If the accident is serious enough, we can come in, collect the evidence and figure out what's going on," says reconstructionist Cpl. Stephen Hilliard.

Cst. Kyle McStravick, an ICARS collision analyst, operates one of the team's eight 3D laser scanners, a \$100,000 piece of equipment that recreates precise, high-resolution crime-scene images by documenting millions of precise laser measurements around the site. Those points are then used to build a 3D image to help investigators understand how the accident happened.

"The more angles we set up, we get a more complete picture," says McStravick. "For instance, there could be a gouge mark that we didn't see, the scanner will pick that up."

Team members also use standard video technology and camera footage.

Cpl. Rick Neger was behind the wheel

of an 18-wheeler when ICARS members filmed and reconstructed an accident scene to determine the coefficient of friction.

"That means we had to determine how slippery the road was," says Neger, who pointed out the test was conducted to confirm the data collected on site. "We had to find out, are we using the information correctly and how hard was the truck braking at the time of the accident."

THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

Remotely piloted aircraft also provide images from above. But that's nothing new for ICARS.

The team has been using remotely piloted aircraft, also called drones, since 2011 and an ICARS member wrote divisional and national policies for their use by the RCMP.

The aircraft's camera provides crystal-clear images of accidents, such as one that recently involved a logging truck that spilled some of its cargo and a small amount of fuel into a nearby waterway in Mission, B.C. The device meticulously recorded the accident scene, the debris field and tire marks in vivid detail.

"In 15 or 20 minutes, it's capable of capturing everything you need," says Cpl. Gord Parsons.

That information is eventually up-

loaded to a large computer screen at the ICARS base in Surrey, where investigators will create and study a comprehensive image that can be manipulated to display detailed views of the accident scene, from multiple angles. These different angles can reveal details that might have been overlooked by the first on-the-scene traffic investigators. It can also be used to create a precise scale diagram.

It's hard work that can sometimes masquerade the emotional side of a highly analytical job that involves working where a fatal accident has just occurred.

"There are instances that get to us all, specifically for me it's files involving children," says McStravick. "On those occasions, I go home and spend as much time with my children and family as possible. It's really the social aspect of our work and family life that helps us cope with these situations."

Nevertheless, team members understand their role and do their job, and that, Jewers says, can lead to road infrastructure reforms.

"A lot of the guys like to say we're giving a voice to the dead," says Jewers. "But that means we can also understand what happened and sometimes make recommendations to improve road safety. We can save lives. That work leads to greater road safety." ■



Collision reconstructionist Cst. Kyle McStravick sets up a 3D laser scanner.

Marlene Chénier, RCMP

TWO-WHEELED WATCHERS

MOTORBIKES OFFER POLICE OPERATORS FLEXIBILITY

By Paul Northcott

For people who don't ride, big motorcycles may seem imposing and difficult to operate. But for the RCMP's traffic enforcement officers on two wheels, bikes provide them with the flexibility to go where police cars can't and offer a surprising sense of anonymity.

Insp. Dale Somerville, officer in charge of British Columbia's South East District Traffic Services, says some motorists still don't recognize police motorcycles.

"They just don't see enough of us on the road," says Somerville, who adds the RCMP motorbikes, such as the Harley Road King or the BMW R1200, take up 20 square feet of space. Cars take up much more.

"You can pull up to a car, right beside the driver's window, and see he's talking on the phone. They'll finally get it in a few seconds and realize: I just got caught distracted driving," says Somerville.

LEARNING TO RIDE

The RCMP veteran, who has spent 21 years in traffic services, also helps train new riders.

During their first week, candidates must prove they have the skills to drive at slow and high speeds, take tight turns, practise their braking and pass a standardized skill course that encompasses all the lessons learned. This course is an annual certification that all RCMP riders in B.C. must complete to continue motorcycle duties.

If successful, newcomers work on riding techniques, officer-violator contact, conducting enforcement and safety issues.

"By the end of the first week we want to know that you're comfortable," says Somerville.

RCMP Cst. Theresa Gajecki has been around bikes for years and is a certified motorcycle instructor with the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia. When she joined the RCMP's Motorcycle Traffic Enforcement Unit in 2015, it was a smooth transition.

"It's an amazing experience," says Gajecki. "To be a woman, to be in uniform, to be visible, to be doing something I love and enforce the rules of the road."

Leann Parker, RCMP



RCMP Insp. Dale Somerville says motorcycles give police the ability to manoeuvre through tight spaces and get up close to identify distracted drivers.

And the roads she patrolled — the commuter-filled highways of B.C.'s Lower Mainland — are busy.

"What I really liked was the nature and high volume of traffic on Highway 1," says Gajecki, who left the motorcycle unit last year. "It could be bumper to bumper for a few hours at a time, but I would go in between vehicles to catch distracted drivers. It (the bike) is just a really great tool for police."

Cst. Mike Scherpenisse, on the other hand, is a relative newcomer to the biking world. But he says that lack of experience may have helped out his training.

"What benefited me the most was that I didn't have any bad habits," says Scherpenisse. "I was kind of a clean slate for them to teach. I was willing to learn and I wanted to be there."

POWERFUL TRAFFIC TOOL

He calls bikes a powerful traffic enforcement vehicle.

"If we have a serious call, the bike can get there so much faster just because of the ability to get through traffic," says the Kamloops, B.C.-based officer.

Sgt. Glen Croutch, who's worked on the escort team for Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge, says the manoeuvrability of motorcycles means drivers can access areas more quickly and detect potential criminal acts that police in patrol cars might not see.

"If there's a call for service at a park, sometimes it's gated off," says Croutch, who ended his riding career last year to take a promotion but still acts as an instructor. "General duty members would have to run across, but I can drive."

And because police riders do their work outside, it's easier to smell certain odours.

"When people are smoking marijuana in their vehicle, I know," says Croutch. "That's because I'm out in the fresh air and it's super easy to smell."

Scherpenisse also credited the bike with his renewed interest in policing.

"I found after doing 12 years of general policing I was getting into a bit of a lull, but getting on the bike has given me a whole new sense of energy and happiness," he says. "I've passed up promotion application opportunities because I don't want to leave the bike." ■



ON THE MOVE

POLICE, TRAFFIC STAFF KEEP SURREY STREETS SAFER

By Paul Northcott

Thousands of newcomers arrive in Surrey, B.C., each year — putting pressure on its infrastructure while also challenging police and municipal officials whose job is to ensure pedestrians, cyclists and motorists remain safe.

According to the RCMP, which is responsible for policing the Lower Mainland city of more than 500,000, about 40 per cent of traffic deaths in the municipality last year were pedestrians.

“The volume of people moving through the city has increased dramatically over the last few years,” says Cpl. Joe McGhee of the Surrey-based Lower Mainland Traffic Services. “People are also driving into Surrey, parking their vehicles and taking the Sky Train into Vancouver.”

ALL ABOUT SAFETY

With so many people moving about, it’s one of the reasons police actively patrol for jaywalkers.

“When we issue a ticket for jaywalking, peoples’ reactions range from everything from bewildered to astonished, to anger,” says McGhee. “Like they’re saying to us: Don’t you have anything better to do?”

“But for us it’s all about safety.”

Sometimes police efforts to catch people who can’t cross a street properly can net bigger fish.

On one early March morning, Cst. Jae Kim was looking for distracted drivers and jaywalkers at the intersection of 104 Ave. and King George Blvd., when he noticed a driver with his head down — a telltale sign of a distracted motorist. He approached the driver’s side and asked him to roll down his window.

“That’s when I could smell it. He told me his last beer was 20 minutes ago,” says Kim, who asked the driver to pull over to a nearby parking lot. That indiscretion meant the driver had his vehicle impounded and could face a driving suspension of one day to as much as three months, fines of more than \$4,000, and mandatory rehabilitation.

“People always think they feel fine (after drinking). But you know what?



Cst. Jae Kim patrols for distracted drivers and jaywalkers at the intersection of 104 Avenue and King George Boulevard in Surrey, B.C.

Martine Chénier, RCMP

They’re not,” says Kim.

The Surrey intersection is also one of hundreds under video monitoring by the city’s Traffic Management Centre (TMC).

Graeme Cross, from Surrey’s traffic signals section, oversees a team of engineers and technologists who check traffic on dozens of wall-mounted monitors at their city hall office. TMC staff control traffic signals, watch for accidents and ultimately keep traffic moving in the city, which welcomes more than 10,000 new residents annually.

“We can look at incidents to see what’s happening and try to get traffic moving,” says Cross, who adds the technology allows the team to examine accidents and work with first responders to understand what went wrong. “Ultimately, it’s about getting people out of the way and get moving or directing and diverting traffic safely.”

PROTECTING PRIVACY

Another thing that concerns Cross is privacy. Although the cameras are easy to spot at the intersection, faces and licence plate numbers are intentionally obscured on the video. “We’re not collecting per-

sonal data,” he says. “It’s important not to lose the public’s trust. We’re just here to manage traffic and improve public safety.”

Nevertheless, when serious accidents do occur, Surrey RCMP can request and obtain TMC footage to help with the investigation. McGhee says the information is critical and time saving.

He pointed to a case where eyewitnesses incorrectly described a vehicle involved in a hit and run. Police subsequently issued a press release with the wrong information. But once a video of the incident was obtained, the press release was corrected, a search was launched and the vehicle was eventually located.

“Sometimes, once we get shown the entire picture, it shows the unreliability of eyewitness testimony,” says McGhee. “Now with the video technology, it’s opened up a whole world of investigative possibilities.”

He says it has also made things easier for police and the courts.

“When these things are played in court, it usually ends things. Most defence lawyers don’t want to see something like that,” he says. ■



MAKING THINGS BETTER

MOBILE ROAD-SAFETY UNITS TARGET IMPAIRED DRIVERS

By Paul Northcott

The RCMP in British Columbia have an established mobile road-safety unit (MRSU) that has worked for years to get impaired drivers off the road. This year, the RCMP in Alberta are launching a similar program. Both initiatives are well equipped to nab motorists who get behind the wheel after drinking too much.

In B.C., the MRSU, also known as Alexa's Bus, has been touring the province since 2014.

It was named after Alexa Middelaer, a four-year-old girl who was killed by an impaired driver as she fed a horse in a rural area of Delta, B.C., in 2008. Alexa's Bus emerged through the fundraising efforts of Alexa's parents, family and friends, and with the support of businesses, community groups and the federal and provincial governments.

"They came to us that same year and asked: What can we do to make things better?" says retired Insp. Ted Emanuels, referring to Alexa's parents, who approached the B.C. Association of Chiefs of Police Traffic Safety Committee. "Here's this innocent girl, a victim of impaired driving, and they wanted to help, so what happened to Alexa would never happen again."

Both Emanuels and Alexa's Bus program manager Sgt. Gerry Desaulniers are passionate when they talk about Alexa, how the mobile unit was created and what officers on the MRSU have accomplished.

REDUCING FATALITIES

Police on Alexa's Bus have laid tens of thousands of charges against impaired drivers and, since 2010, the number of fatal crashes involving alcohol in B.C. has dropped from 111 to 53 in 2016.

The MRSU contains state-of-the-art equipment to process impaired drivers: roadside screening devices, radio equipment, Wi-Fi, surveillance cameras, washrooms and private rooms with satellite phone and cellphone available so suspects can contact their lawyers.

"You can do all the same things onboard Alexa's Bus as you can do at a detachment," says Desaulniers.

Sgt. Gerry Desaulniers



Mobile road-safety units, such as Alexa's Bus in B.C., give police the tools to process samples more quickly and get impaired drivers off the streets.

Through the centre of the MRSU's floor is a dotted line, which serves as the mark for the standardized field sobriety walk-and-turn test. During public tours, Desaulniers will hand guests a pair of goggles that mimic the effects of alcohol and drug intoxication and ask them to walk the line.

According to visitors, the goggles make it impossible to walk straight.

Desaulniers wants Alexa's Bus to tour throughout the province as much as possible to support police officers in the apprehension of impaired drivers.

"It's also designed to inform and educate people about Alexa's tragedy and the various dangerous driving behaviours we see on our roadways," he says. "The ultimate goal is to reduce the number of serious injury and fatal collisions."

RURAL ROADS

The RCMP in Alberta acquired a mobile breath testing vehicle in October 2017.

Sgt. Brent Robinson, an impaired driving specialist with the RCMP Traffic Unit in Alberta, says the goal is simple: catch more impaired drivers, especially in rural areas.

"I hope the number of impaired (caught) goes up," says Robinson, who noted that his urban colleagues regularly

apprehend drunk drivers. "But it's especially challenging in rural areas where there are so many back roads."

Like Alexa's Bus, the Alberta unit will have the latest equipment, tools that are especially important at locations far from detachments.

"There's a ticking timeline with impaired drivers," says Robinson. "We have to get the first sample within two hours. If you have to drive two hours to get the guy to the nearest instrument, you're running into some legal complications."

He says Alberta's Mobile Breath Testing Unit will use resources more effectively.

"In rural Alberta, it's way more convenient for the members to test on site," says Robinson. "It's a lot quicker to process and you'll have less legal arguments over time issues."

The RCMP will also make the unit available to detachments throughout the year.

"When we know about upcoming events like rodeos, country fairs and reunions in the outlying areas of the detachments, then we'll show up with this Mobile Breath Testing Unit, which is clearly marked as a check stop. This will be a highly visible deterrent," says Robinson. ■

just THE FACTS

GANGS



The federal government says gang violence is a serious threat to the safety of Canadian communities. That's because while crime rates in Canada have declined, gang activity increased. Gun homicides have also almost doubled over the past four years — and more than half are linked to gangs.

According to the *Criminal Code of Canada*, being involved in a gang or its activities, or even being aware of a gang's criminal activities — past, present, or future — can lead to as many as 14 years in prison.

There are more than 430 active gangs in Canada. Although most street gang members are adults, the Winnipeg Police Service says many begin their involvement as children.

A youth gang is a group of people who participate in criminal behaviour with the purpose of gaining power, recognition and control. They generally use intimidation and violence to get what they want.

Often, to get accepted into a gang, prospects have to get beaten up, commit a crime or possibly even have to seriously injure or kill someone. About 94 per cent of youth gang members in Canada are male.

The Canadian federal government reports that in the United States, some

studies show youth gang members are responsible for a large proportion of all violent adolescent offences. On average, 20 per cent of gang members committed about 80 per cent of all serious violent adolescent offences.

Young people aged 12 to 17 and young adults aged 18 to 24 accounted for more than a third of individuals accused in police-reported criminal incidents in Canada in 2014, Public Safety Canada says.

In 2016, police in Canada reported 141 gang-related homicides, 45 more than in 2015. The largest increases in the number of gang-related homicides committed with a firearm were reported in Ontario and British Columbia.

University of Alberta sociologist Jana Grekul led a research team that interviewed 175 current and former gang members. Participants were asked why they first became involved with a gang. The Top 4 reasons were to get respect, money, protection, and to fit in.

Gang culture can quickly become gang lifestyle for those involved. Members can also rapidly become indebted to others. They then may be forced to do things that they don't want to do, such as committing violent crimes, drug distribution, theft and other crimes.

Indigenous gangs make up about 20 per cent of Canada's gang population. According to research conducted by Dr. Alanaise Goodwill, Indigenous youth join gangs to escape poverty and obtain the necessities of life. The second reason is incarceration. She says for a large number of Indigenous Canadians in jail, gang membership is often a key to survival.

Goodwill says many Indigenous youth who join gangs have parents who have been, or are a part of, a gang. She noted Aboriginal gangs can be traced back to residential schools, and joining a gang may serve as way to cope with past trauma.

In 2017, the federal government said it would spend up to \$327.6 million over five years, and \$100 million annually thereafter, in new funding to help support a variety of initiatives to reduce gun crime and criminal gang activities.

Public Safety Canada reports that the longer an individual is involved in gangs, the more problems that person may incur. That includes dropping out of school, lack of employment opportunities and/or success and exposure to drug and alcohol use. They may also weaken important connections with family, friends and their community.

According to Goodwill's research, the most successful way for people to leave gangs is to get a real or legal job. But she noted the jobs would need to provide enough money to roughly match the money made from being in a gang.

Researcher Jana Grekul asked gang members about ways to prevent young people from joining gangs. They responded that raising awareness about gang life was key to deterrence, as was the building of strong connections between youth, their parents, families, schools and the community.

— Compiled by Paul Northcott



CÔTE-NORD

RURAL FEDERAL POLICING ON QUEBEC'S COAST

By Amelia Thatcher

The RCMP's Côte-Nord detachment may be small, but the officers who work there crack down on big crime — including drug importation, terrorism, organized crime and border security.

"It's rural federal policing," says Cpl. Hugo Lavoie, the detachment commander. "We're trying to be proactive. It's all about networking so we can prevent serious crime."

Located in Sept-Îles, Que., the detachment is in the heart of Côte-Nord, about 650 kilometres northeast of Quebec City. The five-person RCMP office is responsible for federal policing in approximately one fifth of the province, including 1,200 kilometres of coastline and more than 75,000 residents.

Unlike many RCMP detachments that serve as municipal police, Côte-Nord focuses on proactive intelligence gathering to stop cross-border organized crime on a national scale. They work closely with the provincial police — the Sûreté du Québec — which takes care of the day-to-day municipal and provincial policing.

"We concentrate on the coastal areas since that's the entry point for a lot of crime," says Lavoie. "That's our border. We get a lot of boats and ships from other countries coming in."

PORTS AND BOATS

The RCMP officers at Côte-Nord spend most of their time making connections with residents, businesses, local fishermen and industry workers.

"We tell them to be our eyes and ears," says Lavoie. "If you see something suspicious like a weird boat, give us a call, 24-7, anytime."

The Côte-Nord region is home to some of Canada's largest international ports and these are a major policing priority for the detachment. Hundreds of ships pass through Sept-Îles, Baie-Comeau and Port Cartier every year, loading and unloading millions of tonnes of cargo for Quebec's iron ore and aluminum industries.

Cst. Ghislain Ouellet, who's been an RCMP officer at the detachment for 30 years, visits the ports every week to talk to authorities and the Canada Border



Cst. Ghislain Ouellet (right) visits the Port of Sept-Îles on a weekly basis to talk to employees, and remind them to call the RCMP if they see anything suspicious.

Services Agency.

"It's all about information sharing," he says. "Without the information, we can't do prevention."

Shawn Grant, who's in charge of security at the Port of Sept-Îles, says Ouellet and other RCMP officers have been invaluable in helping keep the port secure.

"They've built a really great rapport with a lot of the port workers," he says. "They get inside information about what's going on through word of mouth and building relationships."

Grant says he never hesitates to call the detachment if he sees suspicious activity. If people are asking strange questions, taking pictures or videos, or testing access codes on doors, he passes the information along to the RCMP.

"The RCMP keeps track of all the suspicious people seen around the port," he says. "We can call them any time, day or night. It's because of them that we can feel safe."

COMMUNITY NETWORKING

Besides the ports, officers at Côte-Nord also visit smaller, rural communities. To access some of the remote fishing villages, RCMP officers must use their zodiac boat in the summer, and snowmobiles in the winter.

"There are a lot of hard-to-reach areas, but residents are always happy to see us,"

says Ouellet. "We talk to them about Coastal Watch, give presentations to local fishermen, and remind post office workers to watch out for suspicious packages."

The detachment is also responsible for policing Anticosti Island in the St. Lawrence River, which is home to approximately 200 residents, a national park and eight landing strips for small planes. Every year, officers from Côte-Nord meet with local lobster fishermen, who spend spring and early summer fishing there.

"They're positioned right near the airstrips, so we give them our business cards and say, 'if you see a suspicious plane or a sailboat that doesn't belong, note down what it looks like and give us a call,'" says Ouellet.

As a result of their networking, the detachment receives several tips per week. Suspicious sailboats and boats are of particular interest to the Côte-Nord RCMP because they're often used for trafficking drugs. Many years ago, Ouellet remembers intercepting one barge that contained 50 tonnes of hashish.

Although busts like that don't happen often, he says it's part of what keeps the job at Côte-Nord so interesting.

"It's also the people and the landscape," says Ouellet. "If you like the outdoors and the sea, it's the perfect detachment." ■



BRINGING A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

IMMIGRANTS JOIN RCMP TO GIVE BACK

By Amelia Thatcher

The face of Canada — and the RCMP — is changing.

As of 2016, more than 7.6 million Canadians identify as visible minorities, representing just over one-fifth of the population. As Canada's national police force, the RCMP strives to recruit officers who are reflective of that diverse population.

"Canada is made up of many colours, ethnicities, cultures and social backgrounds," says Cst. Jacquie Gahimbare. "We need that representation in policing, too, and I wanted to be part of that."

Gahimbare came to Canada in 1991 as a 20 year old from Zimbabwe. After graduating university, she worked in banking for more than 15 years. But she couldn't shake the feeling that she wanted to do more to give back.

So last year, at the age of 47, Gahimbare pursued a career with the RCMP.

"I thought, how can I repay a country that has embraced me and allowed me to stay and call me its citizen?" says Gahimbare, who graduated earlier this year. "What I really wanted to do was serve, and I felt like I

could serve not just my municipality, but on a national scale."

Now working for the financial crime unit in Ottawa, Gahimbare says her diverse life experience and cross-cultural background has proved to be an asset in her new role as a police officer.

"I bring a different perspective to share with people," she says. "I'm able to have those frank conversations, whether it's about skin colour or stereotyping or unconscious bias. I feel like I can change people's perceptions."

SHARED EXPERIENCE

Much like Gahimbare, when Cpl. Dave Fouche came to Canada from South Africa 17 years ago, he felt compelled to give back. He had previously worked in the South African navy, sailing on an icebreaker to Antarctica, and targeting piracy on the east coast of Africa.

"I always wanted to go into policing, but in South Africa it was too dangerous," he says. "I wanted to make a more tangible difference, so when I came to Canada I set my sights on the RCMP."

In 2007, Fouche joined the force. Since then, he's worked in British Columbia as a

front-line police officer and on specialized teams like the Integrated Child Exploitation Unit, the Drug Section and Surrey's Youth Unit. But his biggest passion has been his role as a trained crisis negotiator.

One case in particular stands out to him — when he was called to talk down a suicidal Iranian immigrant. The man was having trouble adjusting to life in Canada, and was about to jump off his 15th floor balcony.

When Fouche arrived, the man's story resonated with his own experience.

"I connected with him and told him that I was an immigrant, too, and I knew what it was like," he says. "I told him the first few years are incredibly hard but it gets better, you just have to open yourself up to change."

After hours of talking, the man finally came off the edge of the balcony to safety. Fouche credits the success to the empathy shared between immigrants.

"In order to resonate with the public and inspire the confidence we need, we must be reflective of the people we serve," he says. "The police are the public, and the public are the police."

YOU CAN DO IT

For Cst. Omid Nezami, making a difference in people's lives was his main motivation for joining the RCMP. He immigrated to Canada from Afghanistan with his family when he was seven years old.

"I really love Canada, and I wanted to serve Canadians," he explains. "Service was a big thing for me."

Nezami worked for the Canada Border Services Agency until 2011, when he decided to join the RCMP. After spending several years doing front-line police work, he joined the recruiting team. Now, he visits schools, community centres and career fairs to inspire people of all ages and backgrounds to apply for jobs with the RCMP.

"The message I always give is this: if I can do it, you can do it too," he says. "The more diversity we have, the stronger we are. We are more open-minded, more flexible and we can overcome the challenges of policing to serve all people and all communities, better." ■

Courtesy of Cpl. Dave Fouche, B.C. RCMP



Cpl. Dave Fouche often shares his personal story as an immigrant from South Africa to connect with community members.



LOOKING FOR LEADS

COLD-CASE INVESTIGATOR TURNS TO SOCIAL MEDIA

RCMP Cpl. Kerry Shima investigates cold-case murders in Alberta. Some are decades old while others are relatively young. All have stumped police. The job involves traditional legwork, but this year Shima turned to social media to leverage more information about hard-to-solve crimes. Paul Northcott spoke to Shima about his work.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE A HISTORICAL CRIME AND WHAT IS YOUR ROLE WITH THE UNIT?

Historical is kind of misleading. Typically we look at any homicide investigation that is no longer fresh. The leads have, for lack of a better word, gone cold. It could be a year old or, for example, it could be one that is 35 years old. Everyone in the unit is an investigator. I take on different roles. Sometimes I'm the primary investigator; sometimes I'm in the field and will go out and collect evidence.

WHEN DO YOU DECIDE A CASE IS COLD?

We have a major crimes unit that investigates murders. When that analysis is over the unit will either carry it through court, or, if they don't come to a resolution and it's still deemed an unsolved homicide, we can take it over. We also look at files that are very old, that have been sitting on a shelf somewhere, and we review them and find that maybe forensic leads, for example, can be reviewed and resubmitted. Or maybe people can be re-interviewed or there's people who haven't been talked to yet for a variety of reasons.

WHY TACKLE THESE CASES WHEN CURRENT ONES MAY BE MORE PRESSING?

Every homicide case is important. We investigate them for the victims and for the families, who obviously will never forget what happened. There's never an unsolved homicide case that's closed. But we are aware resources are pressing and we do have to select cases based on viability. Our oldest case is from the 1930s. Common sense would say it's never going to be solved but you don't really know when that golden nugget is going to come up that warrants reopening cases. That's why we keep track of all of them and

none of them are actually ever closed.

WHAT TRIGGERS RE-OPENING A COLD CASE?

Forensic evidence that can be resubmitted for analysis is always the biggest thing. When we review a file, the first thing we look for is DNA. Things that may have been overlooked. Science evolves daily and one of our best friends is the forensic lab and we talk to them and we try to get as much evidence to be reviewed as possible. But you really have to understand the old file, what the investigators did and what role the witness played at the time.

WHAT CHALLENGES COME WITH INVESTIGATING COLD CASES?

Time is a burden and people forget things. Some other people think they remember things or they have manufactured memory. I mean sometimes you speak to a witness now and their statement seems to be much more detailed than it was from the offence date. That's because people naturally fill in the

blanks. Also, people die, we lose witnesses, and people move. Some people just don't want anything to do with the investigation anymore. But it works the other way as well. In some cold cases, witnesses who were once living high-risk lifestyles were unwilling to talk. But years later they may be at a different place in their lives and are prepared to talk.

WHY DID YOU START YOUR TWITTER ACCOUNT?

I watched a presentation from a Toronto police homicide detective who opened a Twitter account to generate tips for unsolved homicides. I touched base with him and got some ideas and advice because that's what I wanted to do for a case I was working on. It's garnered a lot of attention but it's still a small facet of a very large investigation. I think having the face of the investigation out there and an instant mechanism to get a hold of investigators via Twitter probably led to people reaching out in a fashion they may not have otherwise. ■



Cpl. Kerry Shima, who investigates historic murders in Alberta, uses Twitter to raise more awareness about his cases.

Courtesy of Cpl. Kerry Shima



K9 COMFORT

THERAPY DOGS COME TO KELOWNA DETACHMENT

By Amelia Thatcher

Four legs, wagging tails and wet noses. The new volunteers at the Kelowna RCMP detachment are less than conventional, but they're helping employees cope with stress and improve their health.

Earlier this year, seven therapy dogs visited the RCMP building as part of an eight-week collaborative research program called B.A.R.K. — Building Academic Retention through K9s.

Although the program originally began as a way to improve the mental health of university students, Supt. Brent Mundle thought the dogs could also have a positive impact in a policing environment.

"My main goal is to improve employee well-being and offer as many supports as possible," says Mundle, the officer in charge of the Kelowna Regional RCMP detachment. "I thought this could be a different and unique way to reduce stress and help employees build resiliency."

ANIMAL THERAPY

The program started as a research project at the University of British Columbia (UBC), directed by social psychologist and UBC professor John-Tyler Binfet. He studies the effects of animal therapy on students' well-being, with the goal of reducing stress and combatting homesickness.

When Mundle approached Binfet about bringing the program to the Kelowna RCMP detachment, he jumped at the chance.

"I just dove in and found that there are similarities between the population that I serve — university students who have compromised mental health — and police employees," says Binfet. "In both cases, we saw heightened stress levels and an accumulation of stress."

The pilot project at the Kelowna detachment began in January this year, and lasted eight weeks. This is the first long-term study involving therapy dogs and the stress levels of RCMP employees.

On average, four therapy dogs visited the detachment once per week for 90-minute drop-in sessions. The dogs were available to all employees in the building.



Kelowna RCMP

About 250 RCMP employees participated in the sessions, and many of them were repeat customers. Most people stayed for the length of a coffee break — just 12 minutes. As part of the study, Binfet had each RCMP employee rank their stress level on a scale of one to five before and after the therapy dog visit.

The research team is now compiling the results of the project. Binfet says their initial analysis shows that employees came out of the sessions feeling less stressed than when they entered. This comes as no surprise to Binfet.

"Dogs are social catalysts, they lower your defence mechanisms, and render an individual more open to receiving help," he says. "They also make people more open to establishing social connections that will bolster their well-being."

A HAPPIER DETACHMENT

Mundle has seen first-hand how therapy dogs can help police officers and employees recover from a traumatic event. He was in St. Albert, Alta., when RCMP Cst. David Wynn was shot and killed in 2015.

"One employee would visit the detachment with their service dog and it really made a difference for everyone there," he says. "It made me think about the value of having a therapy dog available even before a critical incident happens."

While the RCMP does have mental health supports for employees, there are few pre-emptive resources that target daily stress and address issues before they get out of hand. That's why Mundle decided to bring the dog therapy program to Kelowna detachment. So far, he's been met with a flurry of positive feedback.

Kelowna RCMP employee Karen Bamford says she went to see the dogs every week they were at the detachment.

"Whenever I came back to my desk the big joke was 'did you just go see the dogs?' Everyone around me could tell," she says. "Even on days when I didn't feel stressed out, I would still go see the dogs. And every single time I came out, I felt even better."

Bamford says the positive effect of interacting with the dogs has carried into other parts of her life.

"The little things like deadlines become more manageable afterwards," she says. "It's the ripple effect, it alters the environment."

Mundle says he hopes the project will continue at his detachment, and others across the country.

"This project helps break down barriers around mental health and encourages discussions," he says. "I've noticed more smiles on faces, everyone is a little more upbeat." ■