

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY

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Executive Digest

Oct 10 2013

The RCMP wants to know if its members feel that their bosses and colleagues “demonstrate honesty,” that they’re “protected from reprisals” if they report wrongdoing, and how often they “feel like leaving the RCMP.”

Page 2

Oct 11 2013

KENORA - Treaty Three Police Service's new interim police chief, Dan Davidson, was appointed to take over the struggling aboriginal police force by the OPP for the next six months. After that time, the police board will need to appoint a permanent replacement for outgoing police chief Conrad DeLaronde or extend Davidson's contract.

Page 3

Oct 14 2013

The UK government has unveiled plans to allow foreign police chiefs to run forces in England and Wales, despite criticism from police officers across the country.

Page 8

Oct 15 2013

OSHAWA - Durham's police chief is set to retire as of May 31, 2014.

Page 10

Oct 15 2013

MONTREAL - Vincent G racitano mortgaged his home to launch the Avis de Recherche (ADR) channel on Quebec cable television.

Page 10

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NEWSWEEK

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Federal government to move on 'Quanto's Law' after death of Edmonton police dog

Oct 16 2013

OTTAWA - The federal government is signalling it will create new legislation to protect animals that work with police.

In its speech from the throne Wednesday, the government said it will bring forward “Quanto’s Law” in honour of a police dog that was killed in Edmonton earlier this month.

Police complained after Quanto was stabbed during the takedown of a fleeing suspect that the strongest criminal charge that could be laid was cruelty to an animal.

The throne speech did not specify what Quanto’s Law would entail.

A private member’s bill to amend the Criminal Code is already before the House of Commons.

Brought forward by Ontario Conservative MP Costas Menegakis, it singles out anyone “who knowingly or recklessly poisons, injures or kills a law enforcement animal,” including a horse or dog, and proposes the same five-year maximum penalty that animal cruelty carries.

Federal Justice Minister Peter MacKay publicly offered his support to the bill in the wake of Quanto’s death.

Menegakis said he was actually inspired to act by the death of Brigadier, a Toronto police horse that had to be put down after police said he was deliberately struck by a driver they were trying to pull over in 2006.

There was a push at that time for Brigadier’s



Law, but nothing happened until Menegakis’s bill was tabled earlier this year.

The government also promised a new law prohibiting the non-consensual distribution of intimate images - a key element of a legislative package to address cyberbullying.

The pledge follows a spate of troubling incidents involving young people, including that of Nova Scotia teenager Rehtaeh Parsons, who took her own life last April after a digital photograph of her allegedly being sexually assaulted was passed around her school.

The speech - which includes a mix of old and new criminal justice proposals - said the government will give police and prosecutors new tools to “effectively address cyberbullying that involves criminal invasion of privacy, intimidation and personal abuse.”

The government said it would also change



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the law so that the worst criminals spend their entire lives behind bars - although it is unclear how this would differ from existing dangerous offender designations.

As expected, the government also confirmed plans to usher in a victims bill of rights.

"For too long, the voices of victims have been silenced, while the system coddled criminals," Gov. Gen. David Johnston said as he delivered the speech.

"Our government has worked to re-establish Canada as a country where those who break the law are punished for their actions; where penalties match the severity of crimes committed; where the rights of victims come before the rights of criminals."

The throne speech reiterated promises to impose restrictions on violent offenders who were found not criminally responsible for their actions when they are released into communities, as well as measures to ensure predators who commit multiple crimes against children are not given discounted sentences.

"Canadians demand that those who prey on our children pay the full price for every devastated life."

The government has already promised to revamp systems for tracking sex offenders including a public database of those convicted of child sex crimes.

It is also reviving the idea of making some dangerous and violent offenders serve their full sentences before being released from prison.

"Our government will end the practice of automatic early release for serious repeat offenders," Johnston said.

"But for the worst of all criminals, even this is not enough. Canadians do not understand why the most dangerous criminals would ever be released from prison. For them, our government will change the law so

that a life sentence means a sentence for life."

The Conservatives also plan to expand the national anti-drug strategy to deal with "the growing problem" of prescription drug abuse.

In addition, it pledges to ensure the "inhumane practice of early and forced marriage" does not happen in Canada.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 9, 2013

Oct 09 2013

EDMONTON - A three-year capital campaign to replace Edmonton's aging police Air-1 helicopter raised \$100,000 in five minutes Wednesday evening.

The money for the new chopper was raised at the True Blue Gala, the Edmonton Police Foundation's signature fundraising event.

Air-1 is aging and parts are becoming more difficult to replace, said Nicole Ng-Muk-Yuen, with the Edmonton Police Foundation.

The helicopter will need to be replaced in less than three years, she said, at a cost of about \$7.5 million.

Air-1 made its public debut at Heritage Days on Aug. 5, 2001, following the launch of a public fundraising drive.

When the proposal to acquire a police helicopter was brought before the Edmonton Police Commission, Air-1 was touted as a fast and effective way of responding to crimes and emergencies within the city's sprawling boundaries.

Air-1 was airborne and patrolling Edmonton's streets in time for the start of the World Championships in Athletics in August 2001.

After a year of leasing, a local community organization raised the estimated \$1.7 million required to purchase the chopper.

Air-2 took over Air-1's role as the department's main eye in the sky in September 2009.

The \$1.65 million to buy Air-2 and the additional \$350,000 spent to outfit it for police work were approved by the Edmonton Police Commission and city council in 2008.

Police estimate the impact of losing one helicopter and needing to depend on only one would result in a productivity loss of 30 to 35 per cent. (Edmonton Journal)

THURSDAY OCTOBER 10, 2013

Oct 10 2013

FREDERICTON - The commanding officer for the RCMP in New Brunswick says he's disappointed that discussions between the provincial government and the Elsipogtog First Nation have yet to resolve a shale gas protest that is into its second week.

Assistant Commissioner Roger Brown says the RCMP is monitoring the situation near

Rexton and will take a measured approach with public safety and people's rights in mind.

The RCMP blocked Highway 134 near Rexton on Sept. 29 after a protest against shale gas exploration began spilling onto the road.

Protesters subsequently cut down trees across another part of the highway and have blocked an entrance to a compound used by energy company SWN Resources to store exploration equipment.

The protesters, which include members of the Elsipogtog community, want SWN Resources to stop seismic testing and leave the province.

Premier David Alward and Chief Arren Sock met this week and agreed to set up a working group to work towards a resolution.

SWN was granted an injunction to end the blockade of their compound but the RCMP has not enforced it.

A spokesman for SWN declined comment Thursday while the matter was before the courts.

Oct 10 2013

OTTAWA - Don't bring your guns to the police station. We pick them up!

That's the word from Ottawa police to people interested in trading in their firearms during an amnesty program that began earlier this week.

Police say they've already had three incidents where people wanting to participate in the Pixels for Pistols gun amnesty program brought their guns into police stations.

Officials say public safety was not at risk in any of the situations.

Oct 10 2013

The RCMP wants to know if its members feel that their bosses and colleagues "demonstrate honesty," that they're "protected from reprisals" if they report wrongdoing, and how often they "feel like leaving the RCMP."

Distributed to employees late last month, the "Professional Climate Survey" is intended to "enhance departmental policies, practices and procedures and create a better work environment for all employees," survey respondents are told.

The survey coincides with the development by the force's top brass in June of a "Professional Ethics Strategic Plan," designed to "increase public trust" in the force and "ensure the RCMP is accountable and ethical." The force is also in the midst of updating its code of conduct for the first time in 25 years.

Earlier this year, the force also introduced a new "Gender and Respect Action Plan," as well as an "Interpersonal Workplace Relationship Policy" that states that romantic or sexual relationships between supervisors or those in positions of authority and subordinates must be reported in writing as they "raise concerns of conflict of interest, preferential treatment,

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bias and/or abuse of authority.”

These developments come in a period of considerable tumult for the force, punctuated by allegations of widespread sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination. Later this month, retired RCMP constable Janet Merlo — the lead plaintiff in a proposed class-action lawsuit against the force — is set to release a book documenting her 20-year RCMP career titled *No One to Tell: Breaking My Silence on Life in the RCMP*.

Robert Gordon, a professor of criminology at Simon Fraser University, said the survey appears to be well-organized, comprehensive and a signal that RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson is trying to turn the organization around.

“Judging from the posture of the commissioner over the last few years, I get the impression this guy realizes there are significant, potentially fatal, problems with his organization. He’s trying to address some of these concerns,” Gordon said.

The survey asks members to indicate whether they think the RCMP is an organization with integrity, if they feel comfortable raising possible ethical breaches to their bosses, and if they feel confident that reports of possible wrongdoing will be addressed impartially. They can choose from five responses, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

Employees are also asked if their supervisors take prompt action when unethical behaviour occurs, and if they are aware that they and their supervisors “must resolve any real, apparent or potential conflicts of interest.”

In another section, employees are asked if they feel they had received adequate training, whether their workloads are manageable and if their supervisors listen to their concerns. They’re also asked if they feel they have been treated fairly and respectfully during their time with the force.

Employees are also probed on their intentions to leave the force. “How often do you actively look for another position outside the RCMP?” they’re asked. Again, they have five possible answers ranging from “never” to “always.”

They’re also asked — yes or no — if they’d recommend the RCMP as a place to work to family and friends.

Sgt. Greg Cox, an RCMP spokesman, said in an email that while employee surveys have been done in the past, the RCMP is “seeking more specific responses to questions and demographics that will help determine problem areas and what resources will help to address them.”

Cox said results should be available in early 2014, but are “intended to be used for internal purposes.”

Gordon said there are limitations to such a survey. Even though respondents are promised anonymity, some may still be reluctant to complete it out of fear their answers could

somehow come back to bite them.

Survey takers are asked at the end to identify their age, gender, marital status, visible-minority status, employee category, the division they work in, and years of service.

(Postmedia News)

Oct 10 2013

VANCOUVER - Vancouver police and ICBC are offering free steering wheel locks to owners of the top 10 most stolen vehicle models in the city, in an effort to cut down on property crime.

Police say the locks are being issued after they noticed a recent increase in the number of stolen vehicles, which are often used to commit other property crimes.

Over the past five years the number of stolen vehicles has declined by more than 50 per cent, said a statement issued by VPD on Thursday.

“However, there was a noticeable change last year when the number of stolen vehicles increased by 6.7 per cent over the previous year,” said the statement.

“Specifically, the rise was driven by an increase in the number of trucks and vans stolen,” said the statement.

Top 10 stolen vehicles in Vancouver:

Honda Civic (Pre-2000) Ford F150, F250, F350 trucks (Pre-1999 F150; Pre-2007 F250 / F350) Honda Accord (Pre-1998) Dodge / Plymouth / Chrysler minivan (1991-2000) Jeep Cherokee (1993-1999) Ford Econoline Van (2000-2007) Toyota Corolla (1990-2004) Chevrolet Silverado / GMC Sierra trucks (1992-2006) Acura Integra (1990-2001) Toyota Camry / Solara (1989-1999)

Vancouver residents who own any of the qualifying vehicles can collect their locks by taking their vehicle registration papers to a VPD public information counter.

Oct 10 2013

Several problems in Canada’s patchwork system of 911 services need to be fixed — such as accurately locating cellphone callers — before new methods like text messages or social media can be used in an emergency, according to a report Thursday.

The report by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) also noted that it was “unacceptable” that the number of 911 calls made in Canada each year are not tracked.

Authored by former CRTC commissioner Timothy Denton, the report noted a “large and widening gap” between what 911 services can do and what people expect they can do.

For example, some Canadians mistakenly believe that emergency responders can monitor social media sites or are always provided a precise location of a mobile phone call. In many instances, when a location is provided, it can be an approximation to the closest cellphone tower.

“Simply put, if they do not know where

you are, they do not know where to send help,” said the report. “Inaccurate information arising from cell towers is also a significant problem in determining where callers are.”

Denton wrote that new technologies to contact 911 will not address these issues, because there is no single authority responsible for these emergency services or different levels of funding for such services.

Despite these roadblocks, the federal regulator wants to hear from consumers about how they think text messages, picture messages, and social media can be incorporated into the 911 service.

The report cautioned that these new technologies have the potential of making the services more complicated, and could involve more training and create new legal liabilities for those who answer 911 calls.

“For example, if Canadians can submit videos, pictures or other digital assets in conjunction with 911 calls, the resources required to manage 911 calls will increase significantly. While in some cases videos or pictures may provide valuable information, too much information could be a danger,” the report said, adding that those who handle 911 calls may not have enough time to look at all of the information.

A group representing police, fire and paramedics said the use of new technologies will increase costs.

The use of new technologies could increase costs up to 30 per cent in 911 budgets, said Lance Valcour, executive director of the Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group.

But Valcour said the use of new technologies to reach 911 can’t be delayed until every municipality and province is ready.

The CRTC has already asked the country’s wireless carriers to make changes to their networks and systems to support 911 emergency text messages from hearing and speech-impaired persons. That service is going to start to roll out in January.

**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 11, 2013**

Oct 11 2013

KENORA - Treaty Three Police Service’s new interim police chief, Dan Davidson, was appointed to take over the struggling aboriginal police force by the OPP for the next six months. After that time, the police board will need to appoint a permanent replacement for outgoing police chief Conrad DeLaronde or extend Davidson’s contract.

“For the next six months, my job is to be the chief of police and to make sure we’re providing professional service to our 26 communities,” said Davidson.

“If the board hasn’t found a suitable candidate within that time frame there is a provision in

my secondment agreement to extend my stay.”

According to Davidson, the Treaty Three Police board of directors asked the OPP to provide them with a interim police chief after DeLaronde announced his intention to resign, and the OPP chose to send him. Although he was never told why he was chosen, Davidson does have experience as a detachment commander and has worked in a few of the communities he must now police.

Davidson just finished his first week at the aboriginal police service and is working with DeLaronde to learn what is required to be the chief. He will be officially taking over as police chief on Oct. 18. Every police force has its own structure and way of doing things and right now Davidson said he’s focused on acclimating to his new surroundings.

Having only been at the police force for a few days, Davidson said he has not formed any opinion on the tough issues facing the force such as tight budget, wage and benefit cuts, a nasty labour conflict, and the drop in officer morale resulting from those problems. Any plans on how he will lead the force over the next six months or what changes he may implement would be premature, he said. Davidson is planning to travel to the communities to meet with chiefs and councils in the coming weeks.

“I’ve come in here with an open mind, so I’m not going to make any kind of knee-jerk reactions to anything, I’m still in the learning phase. It’s not fair for me to say this needs change or that until I fully understand what the problems are and what the solutions might be,” said Davidson.

Information about how the negotiations between the police board and the Public Service Alliance of Canada have been going has been sparse since the two sides agreed to start talking this summer.

(Kenora Daily Miner and News)

Oct 11 2013

OTTAWA - Two Ottawa police officers were acquitted of assaulting a drunk homeless man in the summer of 2011 in a scathing ruling that left critics wondering how the case ever made it to trial at all.

The accusations relied heavily on what a judge described as “the extremely flawed and compromised” accounts of mother and daughter witnesses because Hugh Styres himself testified he could not remember how he ended up bloodied and bruised in the hospital with his eye swollen shut.

Constables Thanh Tran and Colin Bowie had been accused of tripping and pushing Styres face-first onto the pavement around 5:30 a.m. on Aug. 13, 2011 after rousing him from sleep next to two empty bottles of Listerine in Sandy Hill.

Justice Charles Vaillancourt ruled that witnesses Tasha Doucette and her daughter, River, were inconsistent, at times untruthful,

suffered from memory issues and were “unreliable in the extreme.”

Perhaps most significantly, he ruled the women could not have seen Styres be grounded by the officers clearly because their view was partially obstructed by a hedge.

“It almost seems impossible that witnesses could hit so many red-light issues,” he said.

Tran and Bowie were silent after the decision, allowing their lawyers to comment instead.

“In 35 years of experience, that’s one of the strongest judgments that I’ve ever heard vindicating the behaviour of two fine police officers,” said Rodney Sellar, Bowie’s lawyer.

Tran’s lawyer hoped the Special Investigations Unit, in charge of probing alleged criminal conduct involving Ontario police officers, would analyze evidence and witness accounts more carefully in the future.

“We can’t make up all these contradictions and inconsistencies. They’re there and they were apparent to us,” Michael Edelson said.

The president of the Ottawa Police Association echoed that statement.

“We are happy with this decision - notwithstanding that these charges should not have been laid in the first place,” Matt Skof said. “A tremendous amount of public resources were unnecessarily spent as a result of this matter.”

Ultimately, Vaillancourt found that the officers made an appropriate “split-second decision” and responded with necessary force to subdue a tall, drunk man waving his arms aggressively in the street. Styres has a history as a combative and violent drunk but court heard that the officers were not aware of that at the time he was grounded.

“When citizens observe the police in physical contact with someone and an injury results, they may see the injury and immediately assume there is ‘police brutality.’ This conclusion may very well be the result of not having any experience with events that play out on the street,” he said.

(Ottawa Citizen)

Oct 11 2013

TORONTO - Toronto police have racked up \$27 million worth of settlements in civil lawsuits since 2000, including dozens for false arrest and use of force, a database obtained by the Toronto Star shows.

The most common settlement causes include 66 cases of allegations of use of force, 62 claims of false arrest, and 58 allegations of negligent investigations, eight of which involved sexual assaults.

The information, which the Star obtained through a Freedom of Information request, was contained in a larger database showing the settlements in civil cases. The city did not release details of any of the 3,062 settlements contained in the database. Many of the cases are covered by confidentiality agreements. In

total, the city has spent more than \$200 million to settle civil lawsuits since 2000.

The police settlements include:

Four settlements stemmed from the action of a police dog.

Fifteen settlements involved car chases. The biggest was for nearly \$2 million. In 1990, a cab driver named Ali Adaba Ghomi was broadsided by a stolen white Oldsmobile fleeing a police cruiser at Dufferin and Dupont Sts. He was taken to hospital with life-threatening injuries.

Nearly 12 years later, in 2002, the city settled for \$1,858,811.81.

Assault while in custody led to two settlements; bodily injury in custody produced another three.

Injuries or property damage during an arrest led to 11 settlements, including one for \$220,638.32.

Search-and-seizure cases led to 12 settlements worth about \$500,000.

Nine cases that appear to be related to policing during the G20 have already been settled: five for use of force, three Charter violations, one for “crowd/riot control,” all stemming from the weekend of June 26-27, 2010.

Police spokesman Mark Pugash noted that settlements don’t mean the city is admitting liability in a given case.

Sometimes, he said, lawyers for the city’s insurance company simply make a calculation that continuing to fight a case will cost more than settling. “People very often assume these settlements involve admissions of liability — and they don’t.”

Pugash added that 250 settlements was not a particularly high number given that, according to police estimates, the force has had about 15 million contacts with Toronto residents since 2000.

“We’ve seen an astonishing growth in Canada in civil litigation. I’m not complaining about that, but it’s a fact. It’s easier than it’s ever been to sue,” he said.

(Toronto Star)

Oct 11 2013

TORONTO - Toronto Police: to serve, protect and collect.

It’s an open secret — some police officers carry their own trading cards, not unlike those of hockey greats or Pokemon, and hand them out to people who ask.

Toronto’s finest are depicted on horseback, tearing up Lake Ontario on jet-skis and kneeling beside amber-eyed German shepherds. So far, officers with the marine unit, mounted unit and police dog services carry the trading cards.

And they’ve become quite the collector’s items among a small faction of fans.

“We get people running out of buildings saying, ‘Is that Tecumseh?’” said Staff Insp. Bill Wardle, of the mounted unit and police dog service, referring to one of the horses.

Confidence in Motion

The trading cards have been around since Anne de Haas, a Toronto photographer, approached police with the idea in 2004 after seeing U.S. officers handing out similar cards at an equestrian competition.

"I thought: What a cool idea — we should do that up here," de Haas told the Star.

The cards were printed for free thanks to a \$30,000 cheque written to police from an anonymous donor who heard about the project. De Haas took the photos pro bono.

"I really believe in getting kids involved so they can develop a relationship with police," de Haas said.

The mounted unit soon realized they had hit on something. "Kids just love them," Wardle said.

The project's success led to a dog deck in 2006, and a marine unit series in 2012.

The cards aren't just for parades and public events; officers often take them along to calls.

"If a search warrant is being done, the officer can hand the cards to kids in the area, so they don't just see the officers doing an operation. They get a bond with the officer and the dog, so it really humanizes the experience," Wardle said.

(Toronto Star)

Oct 11 2013

REGINA - Government investigators have cleared a Regina police officer of any wrongdoing for shooting a man's dog.

The Public Complaints Commission says the officer's decision to shoot the dog in the home of Peter Cote last March was justified because it was a vicious animal.

The Regina Police Service has said the officer killed the pit bull while chasing an assault suspect.

The officer said he fired after the pit bull got into a scuffle with a police dog and the dog's handler.

Hundreds of people complained about the shooting on Facebook at the time, prompting the police to temporarily close the Regina Police Service Facebook page.

The commission says while the death of the dog was unfortunate, the officer is not guilty of misconduct.

Oct 11 2013

SASKATOON - Investigators have cleared Saskatoon police of wrongdoing after someone complained a man was dropped off outside the city in frigid temperatures.

The case involves 19-year-old Drayton Bull.

The Public Complaints Commission says reports and records show no Saskatoon Police Service cruiser was outside the city limits on Jan. 21.

Witnesses say Bull had been drinking that night and only can recall part of what happened, saying he encountered someone wearing black pants.

The commission says there is no reason-

able basis to support the complaint.

Following the allegation, some people posted messages on the Saskatoon police Facebook page suggesting racism was involved.

Oct 11 2013

LONDON, Ont. - It looks like someone in London, Ont., picked the wrong neighbourhood to be nosing around.

Police in the southern Ontario city say Chief Brad Duncan was getting ready to take his dog for a walk Thursday when he saw two male suspects acting suspiciously around a vehicle in a neighbour's driveway.

It's alleged that when Duncan confronted the pair, one of the suspects fled but Duncan managed to arrest the other one.

Police say the chief "took physical control" of the suspect, as he resisted during the arrest.

Uniformed officers soon arrived and took over the investigation.

Kyle Pettigrew, 21, of London, is charged with trespassing at night and resisting arrest.

Oct 11 2013

TORONTO - A convicted child-killer's push to have evidence in cases carrying a life sentence preserved for the rest of the offender's life has been denied.

The Ontario Appeal Court has dismissed an appeal filed by the Innocence Project on behalf of Amina Chaudhary, who was found guilty in 1984 of killing her lover's eight-year-old nephew.

Chaudhary continues to claim her innocence and has asked the federal government for a ministerial review of her case.

Her lawyers initially argued autopsy photographs that could help clear her name had disappeared due to inconsistent preservation rules.

At an appeal hearing last month, however, lawyer Alan Young focused instead on the potential risk to the rest of his client's file, including samples of hair and soil.

But the three-judge panel upheld an earlier ruling in the charter challenge that found Chaudhary's charter rights hadn't been breached because she hadn't suffered from the loss.

Oct 11 2013

CHARLOTTETOWN - A longtime RCMP officer in P.E.I. has admitted to stealing prescription drugs from a police locker.

Cpl. Blair Ross pleaded guilty Friday in provincial Supreme Court in Charlottetown to charges of stealing exhibits with a value of more than \$5,000, breach of trust, and possession of oxycodone, morphine and hydro-morphone.

The 25-year veteran of the force was suspended with pay and charged in June after the commander of the King's District noticed irregularities with some of the exhibits stored

in a secure room.

At the time, Ross was responsible for the care and handling of police exhibits at the Montague detachment.

The RCMP have said that police believe the drugs were taken for personal use.

Ross is scheduled to return to court on Feb. 6 for sentencing.

Oct 11 2013

CALGARY - Lead-foot drivers beware: RCMP are watching you from the sky.

Mounties and sheriffs have been patrolling Alberta highways by helicopter since the summer, and in just a few months they've busted hundreds of violators.

So far, they've handed out 57 tickets in just 48 hours of flying time, along with nearly 400 speeding tickets.

The helicopter will fly over 50 problem spots throughout the winter, as long as highways are clear enough to see the painted lines.

"It's been going very well," says Cpl. Darrin Turnbull from the RCMP Airdrie Integrated Traffic Unit, adding they can also catch extremely aggressive drivers.

"We're able to observe them over a longer period of time, longer distance. That leads us to be able to see the bad driving behaviours like following too closely, unsafe lane changes and passing on the right."

(Global Calgary)

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 12, 2013

Oct 12 2013

EDMONTON - While officers in Edmonton's Canine Unit should have been celebrating their results at the Police Canine Trials, officers instead are thanking the community for the support they've received after the loss of police service dog Quanto.

"It's a very difficult void to fill, but it certainly helps when the community rallies around us, and we've certainly seen that," said acting Staff Sgt. Troy Carriere, an officer with the canine unit.

Quanto, a German Shepherd with over a hundred arrests to his name over his four years of service, was fatally stabbed while he and his handler Constable Matt Williamson pursued a man fleeing a car with stolen plates.

Paul Joseph Vukmavich, 27, is facing charges of possession of stolen property, dangerous driving, criminal flight and cruelty to an animal.

"Yes, this was a service dog, but it was also a family pet," said Carriere. "I think a lot of people can relate to that."

The unit has received an outpour of support from across the country, fielding hundreds of emails, phone calls and letters of

support, many offering donations to the Edmonton Police Foundation.

Sgt. Bart Lawczynski, also with the canine unit, says those donations will go towards equipment, training and hopefully a permanent memorial for all of Edmonton's former four-legged officers.

"We'd like to see our own monument," Lawczynski said.

"It's the least we can do for Quanto," Carriere added, referencing a temporary monument outside of the kennels.

EPS has lost five service dogs in the line of duty.

Carriere says with an increase in violent crimes in Edmonton, with 17% of calls they deal with related to armed robberies or otherwise weapons related and criminal flights up 35% this year, officers who are part of the 12-dog unit depend on their dogs to save lives.

The loss put a dampener on results from the annual Canadian Police Canine Dog Trials in Sannich, B.C. where Edmonton's police service dogs placed third, fourth and fifth overall.

"It's quite a feat for our unit, it's quite a feat for our members of our unit," Lawczynski said.

While Williamson and his family still mourn the loss of Quanto, the officer has indicated he will return to the unit when he's ready and EPS has already started the search for a new recruit.

(Edmonton Examiner)

Oct 12 2013

SASKATOON - A Saskatchewan mother whose son died in a police holding cell after she says he was mistaken for drunk says it has been a long three years waiting for a public inquiry.

The Saskatchewan government has announced an inquest into the death of Brandon Daniels will begin this month.

Daniels, 19, was found dead in his cell at the Saskatoon Police Service Detention Centre on July 3, 2010.

Daniels was from the Mistawasis First Nation and his mother, Sherry Bird, says he had gone to Saskatoon to shop and got separated from his family.

Police said in a news release at the time that Daniels was arrested because he appeared to be intoxicated.

But Bird says her son was taking prescribed medication for a suspected mental illness and took a large dose of acetaminophen after getting lost.

Oct 12 2013

EDMONTON - The Alberta government says it won't ask the federal government to seek the extradition of a convicted sex offender who police say fled Canada for the United States.

Police have been trying to track down

Michael Stanley since Oct. 1 when the electronic monitoring bracelet he was wearing was cut off.

An arrest warrant was issued for Stanley on charges of breach of recognizance, mischief and driving offences.

Police say Stanley, who has a history of offences against women and children, crossed the border into Washington State.

Alberta justice spokesman Dan Laville says Alberta prosecutors don't believe the charges Stanley faces warrant triggering the extradition process.

He says the requirement that Stanley wear an ankle bracelet is not a criminal matter in itself.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 13, 2013

Oct 13 2013

VICTORIA - New details have emerged about how a Vancouver police officer, found guilty of corruption for interfering in an Oak Bay homicide case, allegedly helped his cousin, a suspect, dodge the investigation by providing sensitive police information.

Cst. Stephen Todd was placed on administrative leave in 2011 after allegations arose that he lied during a homicide probe into the

2001 death of an Oak Bay man, Owen Padmore.

Todd told homicide investigators that in July 2010, while on duty, he met with his cousin, a suspect in the homicide investigation.

The Vancouver officer checked the police database and revealed to his cousin information that investigators had found out about him.

"Cst. Todd also admitted that in September 2010, approximately two months after his cousin made a confession to him, he provided information to his cousin on how to avoid police investigative techniques, including wire taps and surveillance," according to documents released by the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner.

When Todd, a 13-year veteran with Vancouver police, was told he was being investigated for professional misconduct, he recanted evidence that he had provided to homicide investigators.

Todd was the subject of a misconduct investigation, led by New Westminster Police Chief David Jones, which last month found Todd guilty of corrupt practice, deceit, neglect of duty, improper disclosure of information and discreditable conduct.

Jones recommended that Todd be fired. Todd remains suspended without pay.

Todd has asked for a public hearing to fight the recommendation that he be dismissed.



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The details about Todd's involvement were released in the police complaint commissioner's notice of public hearing.

Under the Police Act, any officer can request a public hearing if the discipline includes either dismissal or a reduction in rank, said deputy police complaint commissioner Rollie Woods.

"The commission here has absolutely no choice," Woods said.

"He has the right to have this evidence reviewed by a retired judge."

The public hearing could be lengthy and complicated because of numerous witnesses from Oak Bay police, Vancouver police and any witnesses Todd's lawyer wants to call.

On Dec. 10, 2001, Padmore, 31, was visiting his mother's house on Hampshire Road in Oak Bay.

He left the house and returned suffering from a head injury.

His mother called 911 and Padmore was taken to hospital, where he died the next day.

In March 2011, Oak Bay police arrested a 38-year-old Oak Bay man, reportedly a friend of the Padmore family, who faced charges of manslaughter. However, Crown prosecutors did not approve those charges.

Oak Bay Police Chief Mark Fisher said the homicide investigation remains open. When asked if Todd's actions hampered the police investigation, he said, "Obviously it's not helpful."

"I think when the Vancouver police department became aware of it, they handled it appropriately and started a Police Act investigation."

(The Province)

Oct 13 2013

VANCOUVER - A man wielding a knife threatens to kill passersby, another man says he'll burn down an apartment building and kill everyone inside, and a third man is taken to hospital after trying to throw himself off a bridge for the second time in one night.

The incidents happened within one week last month, and Vancouver Police say they're part of the shocking statistics that show a dramatic spike in such scenarios over three years involving the mentally ill and their subsequent contact with law enforcement and the city's hospitals.

Police say 21 per cent of their calls involve someone who is mentally ill, and apprehensions under the Mental Health Act have risen 16 per cent between 2010 and 2012.

Rising drug use and a lack of safe housing are major factors in the problem that is overwhelming limited resources, experts say.

Drug problems are pervasive in many large communities, but in a city like Vancouver, where dial-a-dope is a "five-minute delivery" that is "faster than pizza," it is es-

pecially hard to prevent people from using illegal substances, said Darrell Burnham of Coast Mental Health.

At a roundtable discussion on mental health and addictions last month, the City of Vancouver estimated about 70 per cent of the city's homeless or single-room occupancy residents are seriously addicted and/or seriously mentally ill. Many also have brain injuries due to physical trauma, medical causes, or drugs.

A five-point plan announced by Vancouver's mayor and the police chief includes calls for an additional 300 long-term, mental-health treatment beds, the establishment of a crisis centre, and more housing facilities to help the mentally ill.



The UK government has unveiled plans to allow foreign police chiefs to run forces in England and Wales, despite criticism from police officers across the country.

In a statement to MPs today, Policing Minister Damian Green announced plans to bring in chief constables from countries with a similar legal framework and policing model to the UK, such as the US or Canada.

He also revealed plans to recruit officers directly to the rank of superintendent and fast-track officers to the rank of inspector. Currently all police officers must start as a police constable and work their way up.

The BBC says the introduction of the scheme, which would see at least 20 police superintendents and 80 fast-track inspectors recruited next year, will bring to an end 180 years of tradition of bobbies starting their career on the beat.

It will also "bring to an end the policing version of the closed shop", according to Green.

"This will open up policing to bright and talented people from all walks of life who are seeking a new challenge," he wrote in yesterday's Sunday Times.

The plans to recruit chiefs from abroad would also open the way for senior foreign officers such as Bill Bratton, the former New York police chief, to take over British police forces. This particular proposal was opposed during the consultation period by the three main associations representing police officers of all ranks: the Police Federation of England and Wales, the Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales, and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

They argued that there is enough talent within UK police forces, that UK policing experience is crucial to running a force, and that

the UK policing culture has a more restrained use of force than many other countries, such as the US.

ACPO today conceded that the police service has "nothing to fear" from direct entry. But the Police Federation, which represents officers to the rank of chief inspector, has strongly opposed the policy, and today reiterated its view. "To command a policing operation effectively, a senior officer needs first-hand experience of responding in an operational capacity to incidents they would not encounter in any other walk of life," said its vice chairman Steve White.

Chief Superintendent Irene Curtis, president of the Superintendents' Association, has said that direct entry creates "unnecessary risks"

(The Week)

Oct 14 2013

EDMONTON - A judge has denied the appeal of an Edmonton police officer accused of using excessive force during an arrest.

Sgt. Aubrey Zalaski was charged with unlawful or unnecessary exercise of authority after a complaint from Timothy Ferguson.

The charge stems from an incident on December 24, 2003 when officers found Ferguson upset, violent and intoxicated.

According to documents from the provincial Court of Appeal, Ferguson was so distraught that he had thrown a full-sized propane barbecue off the 10th floor balcony and attempted to fight off the officers who wrestled him down and handcuffed him.

It was at that time that Sgt. Zalaski arrived to assist the officers.

He indicated he found Ferguson kicking and thrashing on the ground.

Police placed a spit mask over Ferguson's head and it was at that point, with Ferguson still fighting, that Sgt. Zalaski said he used his Taser four times in two minutes.

It was after the fourth stun that Ferguson stopped kicking.

He was then taken to a hospital where he was verbally abusive to the staff.

Originally, an internal police investigation found there wasn't enough evidence to convict any officers involved in the case.

Following that decision, Alberta Law Enforcement Review Board (LERB) directed charges be laid against Sgt. Zalaski.

Zalaski appealed the decision.

Justice Jack Watson denied Zalaski's appeal and upheld the decision of the LERB that concluded Zalaski did use excessive force against Ferguson.

In the report, Justice Watson said he found the board acted within the range of options open to it and the points raised by Zalaski in his appeal did not "raise an extricable or discrete question of law".

(CTV Edmonton)

TUESDAY OCTOBER 15, 2013

Oct 15 2013

VANCOUVER - A B.C. lawyer who became the first barrister in Canada to be sentenced for helping a criminal organization could face more time behind bars.

Crown prosecutors are in the B.C. Court of Appeal, fighting the one year jail term handed to Vernon, B.C., lawyer William Mastop in April, after the 46-year-old admitted to aiding a North Okanagan gang known as The Greeks.

According to the Crown, Mastop gave the gang sensitive court documents that led to several murders, but the trial judge ruled there wasn't enough evidence to prove the information led to the deaths, and Justice Mark McEwan also found only a portion of Mastop's behaviour was criminal.

McEwan ruled Mastop's actions were little more than a "convenience" to the Greeks and said the moderate jail term should reflect Mastop's loss of career and community standing.

Mastop hasn't practised since 2010 and also faces additional disciplinary action from the Law Society of B.C., which says it could impose penalties ranging from reprimand to disbarment.

The appeal court hearing is slated for a single day and a decision from the panel of judges is expected to be reserved.

Oct 15 2013

REGINA - A dog found lying in a Regina alley with a badly injured leg is getting help from the city's police officers.

Staff Sgt. Evan Bray says a constable on routine patrol was flagged down Sunday by a frantic woman who found the dog.

It's believed the dog was hit by a car.

Police took the canine to an emergency animal hospital, but the dog's owner couldn't be found, so officers pooled their own money to pay for its treatment.

Bray says veterinarians believe the dog will survive and they're also hopeful they can save its leg.

Officers have unofficially named the dog "Copper" and hope to find him a good home once he's recovered.

Oct 15 2013

CALGARY - An Alberta judge has made no recommendations to change police pursuit policies following the deaths of two men in a fiery crash in Calgary.

Provincial court Judge Mark Tyndale's fatality inquiry report released today re-

viewed the June 2010 deaths of Byron and Ryan Gray.

The Grays died after the speeding Jeep they were in crashed into a tree and a house while being chased by police.

Tyndale says the Jeep was going up to 154 kilometres per hour, but ruled that what happened was not a high-speed police pursuit.

Byron Gray died at the scene of the crash and his nephew Ryan Gray died later in hospital.

Tyndale praised the performance of police and emergency medical technicians.

He made recommendations that fall outside the mandate of fatality inquiries to deal with issues that could prevent similar tragedies.

He says the province should pay the legal costs of families whose loved ones are the subjects of a fatality inquiry.

Tyndale also recommends that police cruisers be equipped with in-car camera systems.

Oct 15 2013

TORONTO - When a police officer is faced with a person advancing with a sharp object, their response is based on the person's behaviour and not their mental state, an inquest into the police shooting deaths of three mentally ill people heard Tuesday.

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Royal Jardine-Douglas, Sylvia Klabin-gaitis and Michael Eligon were gunned down by Toronto police in separate but similar incidents in the last three years.

The coroner's inquest - which is expected to raise questions about police use of force and how front-line officers deal with the mentally ill - heard from a police expert who repeatedly said officers have to react rapidly to evolving situations.

"Someone's condition isn't what drives the response. It's that behaviour that we have to respond to," John Weiler, the use-of-force co-ordinator at the Ontario Police College, explained.

"Once there's an imminent threat, all we do is respond."

Weiler spent the better part of three hours detailing police use-of-force training, focusing in particular on the model that officers use as a basis for making their decisions in the field.

"The model is dealing with behaviours. Not reasons for behaviours," he noted when asked why the model didn't have a category on how to deal with the mentally ill.

"We can't list everything in the model (like impaired driving and domestic violence). The model speaks to all those things now although they're not laid out in point form."

When asked by lawyers for the families of those killed if integrating specific information on how to better respond to mentally ill people would be beneficial, Weiler said such an addition could cause confusion.

But when presiding coroner David Eden asked if a different approach to the mentally ill would be adopted if scientific evidence showed it reduced the chance of death, Weiler said such an approach would be "fabulous."

Weiler emphasized that "de-escalation is always a consideration." If a situation has progressed beyond a certain point though, he said officers under threat are trained to use their firearms to protect themselves and others.

"We don't train officers to shoot to kill," he noted. "We train them to shoot to stop."

This week's proceedings are hearing primarily from policing and mental health experts in order to give the presiding jury a thorough grounding in current practices.

Oct 15 2013

OSHAWA - Durham's police chief is set to retire as of May 31, 2014.

The Durham Regional Police Services board accepted the retirement of Chief Mike Ewles at its Oct. 15 meeting.

"It is with mixed emotions that I made the announcement to the board today," said Chief Ewles. "I've committed my entire professional life to an organization in which I take great pride, that I love and care deeply about. But after seven years as chief, it's time to pass the

torch, and to focus more energy on my family and community interests."

Chief Ewles began his career with DRPS in May 1982 as a uniformed officer in Ajax.

Over the course of his career, he has worked in every community in Durham and served in a range of areas including tactical support, the criminal intelligence branch and the employee services branch.

He was promoted to the rank of inspector in 2002, followed by deputy chief in 2006, and chief in 2007.

"Under his command, we have witnessed a significant drop in crime and among the best clearance rates in the country," said board chairman Roger Anderson. "We are working more closely with our community partners as a problem-solving organization and not simply reacting to criminal incidents. Chief Ewles has positioned the DRPS for long-term success and his contributions will leave their mark on the service for years to come."

The board will begin the process of selecting the next chief in the coming weeks.

(Durhamregion.com)

Oct 15 2013

MONTREAL - Vincent G racitano mortgaged his home to launch the Avis de Recherche (ADR) channel on Quebec cable television.



When the bills started piling up, he doubled down on his investment, using his parents' house as collateral so he could keep pumping money into the station.

"It was putting me in the poorhouse and almost putting the people who loved me in the poorhouse," G racitano told The Gazette. "But I had a dream that ADR could work and for a time it really took off."

Now it appears his gamble may have been in vain as ADR — a station designed to help police find missing people and track down fugitives — saw its renewal application for mandatory carriage rejected by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission in August. Without the \$1.6 million in annual funding ADR collected in mandatory subscriber fees from Videotron and other carriers, G racitano fears his life's work may go up in smoke.

Police departments across Canada are rallying behind ADR, calling it an essential tool for law enforcement in Quebec. Despite let-

ters from the Canadian Association of Police Chiefs and dozens of victim advocacy groups supporting the Montreal-based cable station, the CRTC stands by its Aug. 8 decision.

The telecommunications regulator says G racitano's channel can't prove it makes Canada a safer place by broadcasting news on wanted felons and missing people. Furthermore, the CRTC said that in an era with social media and interactive mobile news, a linear medium like television is no longer the most viable means for public-safety awareness. ADR's less than stellar ratings didn't help its case before the CRTC either.

G racitano is appealing the decision.

"The way I see it is, you never need a smoke detector until your kitchen's on fire," G racitano said. "This isn't about who sells the most hotdogs, it's about helping people. For the families of victims, for the families of missing children, we're an important ally, we're an essential service."

Before venturing into television in 2002, G racitano owned a company that manufactured award plaques and other signs. It wasn't until his business was robbed that G racitano decided to found a cable network with the sole purpose of solving the crimes that slip through police investigators' fingers.

To do that he had to pay Videotron upward of \$40,000 each month just to have access to 750,000 subscribers. The station ran on a shoestring budget, limiting its broadcasting to slides of mug shots and missing people.

But that changed in 2007, when the CRTC approved ADR's request for mandatory carriage in Quebec. Under the licensing agreement, the network thrived and G racitano was able to climb out of the financial hole he'd dug for himself and expand ADR's operations.

ADR hired 10 full-time journalists and began producing original content that police say became a reference tool for departments throughout Quebec.

"In Quebec, it's the only television station that helps us keep our hope alive," said Pina Arcamone, the director general of Quebec's Missing Children's network in a document released by ADR. "To take away ADR is to take away hope in that glimmer of hope."

Henri Provencher also came out in support of ADR in a statement of support during the CRTC licensing hearings last April. Provencher's granddaughter C drika went missing over six years ago, when the 9-year-old was approached by a man who claimed to be searching for his lost dog. She hasn't been seen since.

"When someone takes the time to help you like that, it's a gift from heaven," he said. "The station is an asset for families like ours."

Without the mandatory licensing funding, ADR has had to gut its newsroom, laying off 10 of its 16 employees.

(Montreal Gazette)

Oct 15 2013

There are currently six analysts working for the police department; the goal is to add another eight. Several are in training right now.

A crime analyst examines what kinds of crimes are being perpetrated, where they are happening and at what time of day, to better determine trends and policing needs.

“If we’re not using that type of analysis, we’re just waiting for crime to happen and then pursue it.”

Winnipeg is behind other jurisdictions when it comes to this kind of policing, Clunis said.

(Shaw Media)

Oct 15 2013

Syed Hussain, the unsuccessful candidate, was selected for an interview after applying for the police service's evaluation and research co-ordinator position but was told in January 2012 that he didn't cut the mustard.

Hussain first made an informal complaint with the Ottawa Police Service. The hiring decision was reviewed and confirmed. Hussain has since filed a formal complaint with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, and in an interim decision, the Ottawa Police Services Board has been ordered to disclose data from all the applicants to show the raw number and percentage of candidates who self-identified on the basis of gender, aboriginal status, visible minority or disability and age.

Hussain had also asked the tribunal for composition data on race, ethnic origin, age at recruitment and citizenship of every Ottawa police employee, civilian and sworn. But the police service told the tribunal it doesn't collect such data on its employees.

“With regard to the applicant’s broader request, I am not prepared to order the respondent to conduct a workforce survey to obtain composition data that it does not already possess,” the tribunal vice-chair said in a Sept. 19 decision.

Hussain has also asked the tribunal to remove the successful candidate from office and hire him for the job.

to be affected by any remedy of reinstatement of the applicant to the Evaluation and Research Coordinator position may be granted, it is my view that the incumbent needs to be put more formally on notice of the allegations raised in this proceeding and the fact that his rights may be affected,” the tribunal vice-chair said in the Sept. 19 decision.

Andrew Berry, hired as the police service's evaluation and research co-ordinator in January 2012, has filed notice to the tribunal saying he will intervene. Had he not intervened, the tribunal said, its upcoming hearing would "proceed in the absence of his participation."

(Ottawa Citizen)

THE CANADIAN PRESS 

Oct 16 2013

HAMILTON, Ont. - Hamilton police want to arm their frontline officers with Tasers now that it's approved by the province, but city officials say they want Queen's Park to pick up the tab.

Hamilton's general issues committee has voted to ask the province to pay the nearly \$1 million cost for the proposed expansion of the use of conducted energy weapons.

Currently, 219 of Hamilton's police officers are trained to use Tasers.

The police force's \$992,000 request, based on the province's decision to allow for their expanded use, would train and equip another 592 officers.

The province announced in August that it would permit all frontline police officers to carry stun guns, but said police forces would have to find the funding in their budgets.

Ontario police chiefs and associations had been pushing the government for years to expand the use of stun guns, and coroner's inquests have recommended expanding their use since 2004.

(CHML, The Canadian Press)

Oct 16 2013

VANCOUVER - Want to report that driver who just ran a red light? Find out what crimes have been happening in your neighbourhood?

There's an app for that.

The Victoria Police Department has become the first law enforcement agency in Canada to launch a mobile app that lets people report crimes and get instant alerts of missing children, crimes in their area and other news.

While the RCMP has a smartphone app that pushes out news and information, the Victoria PD, which was among the first Canadian police agencies to start using social media, has gone a step further with the launch of its interactive app.

"We'll be the first branded police app that allows you to do things like report crime and track crime online," said Victoria police spokesman Mike Russell. "The app has an alerts feature that allows us to send push notifications specifically if there is a missing child, if there's a traffic block..."

"Those alerts from a public safety point of view are what we are most impressed with," he said. "Literally within five minutes of a kid going missing I can have a picture of that kid to every person who has our app on their smartphone."

It doesn't replace calling 911.

"It's not for reporting crimes in progress," said Russell adding that it also doesn't include reporting crimes such as home burglary where police would be going to the scene to take fingerprints or other evidence.

There are 11 different incidents that can be reported through the app, from counterfeit currency to driving complaints, bike thefts or found bikes, graffiti, mischief or theft under \$5,000 and others.

A Crime Maps feature on the app lists crimes and also maps them. The app also has a section entitled 'Is this yours?' linking to the Victoria PD's Pinterest site with photos of stolen goods that have been recovered.

"We've been successful in returning stolen property through Pinterest," said Russell.

The app also links to the police department's YouTube, Twitter and Facebook accounts as well as its news releases, job postings, blog posts, Crimestoppers, recruiting and other information.

(Vancouver Sun)

Oct 16 2013

CONCEPTION BAY SOUTH, N.L. - Police investigating a double-murder suicide in eastern Newfoundland say it's believed the shooter had been involved in a romantic relationship in the past with the female victim.

A 35-year-old woman and 45-year-old man were shot and killed last night at the Villa Nova Plaza in Conception Bay South.

Constable Talia Murphy says there is information to suggest the woman was killed inside a doctor's office at the plaza, while the man was shot in the parking lot.

Both were pronounced dead at the scene.

The body of a 43-year-old man, who police believe was responsible for the shootings, was found today in a cemetery in St. John's.

Murphy says police are not searching for any other suspects, and there is no threat to the public.

She also says a handgun believed to be used in the incident has been recovered.

The surrounding area where the shooting happened was quickly cordoned off last night by police.

Businesses were shut down and residents advised to stay inside their homes as police searched for the shooter.

Oct 16 2013

TORONTO - Significant gaps remain in dealing with mentally ill prisoners, Canada's top correctional official admitted on Wednesday even as he urged jurors to avoid making costly recommendations to address the problem.

Don Head, commissioner of Correctional Service of Canada, told the Ashley Smith inquest that expensive suggestions would be rejected.

"There is no free pocket money that we can go to to implement some of those things," he said.

From 2001-2005, there were 85 suicides, accidental deaths and homicides in federal prisons. Corrections complied with one-third of ensuing coroner jury recommendations, the inquest heard.

Head said the response to jury suggestions is now "more robust."

Head also tells the inquest into the death of Ashley Smith that training recommendations are difficult to implement because of staff shortages.

Head was deputy commissioner during Smith's incarceration, but was away on language training during a significant part of her stay in federal prisons.

He says he had little to do with her case management.

Smith, 19, strangled herself in her segregation cell in Kitchener, Ont., in October 2007.

Oct 16 2013

TRURO, N.S. - RCMP in Nova Scotia say a suspect in a suspicious death died Wednesday from a self-inflicted gunshot wound during a lengthy standoff with police.

Police say the 49-year-old armed man barricaded himself inside a car in the Portapique area, about 40 kilometres west of Truro.

The standoff lasted most of the day while a crisis negotiator tried unsuccessfully to coax the man from his car.

Sgt. Alain LeBlanc says the man died shortly before 6 p.m.

He says the man was a suspect in the death of a 47-year-old woman, whose body was discovered at an apartment in Truro Heights earlier in the day.

No names have been released.

LeBlanc says the incident has been referred to the Nova Scotia Serious Incident Response Team for investigation.

Oct 16 2013

TORONTO - The Toronto Police Service Mounted Unit made history on the weekend, becoming the first team to win every category at the North American Police Equestrian Championships in Virginia.

Constable Gregory John, 44, and Trooper, a 10-year-old Percheron-Hackney cross, won in the uniform, equitation, obstacle and team obstacle categories and received that best overall combined score. The TPS team also won first place over all.

"I truly didn't expect for it to happen, but it did," Constable John said. "The stars aligned."

About 60 teams from across North America competed this year - slightly down from

previous years since several of the U.S. teams were unable to compete because of the federal government shutdown.

NAPEC evolved out of a long history of police equestrian competitions that focused mainly on equestrian skill: walking and trotting in circles at command. But these days, its focus is on riding as it relates to actual police work – officers compete on obstacle courses to simulate real-life scenarios.

One of the courses involved a stopped pickup truck. As the officer and his horse approached, something popped out of the back of the truck, and the officer was judged on how well he kept his horse calm (and complete the exercise by placing a ticket on the truck's windshield). Another had officers navigating their horses around a raised sewer grate with smoke billowing out from it.

These competitions reaffirm the unique skill set of police horses and officers in the mounted unit, Constable John said. On an average day, mounted officers might be called upon to conduct crowd control, to attend a ceremonial event, or simply to patrol the city's downtown.

"It's not a natural thing for your horse to ride the streets of Toronto," he said. "So you have to look out for the pitfalls that could cause you or your horse harm – you have to watch that a parked car is not going to turn out into a lane. ...If you see a delivery-truck driver at the back of his truck, you have to anticipate that he might drop something or make a loud noise and scare your horse."

This was the fourth year that Constable John has competed at NAPEC. He described Trooper as "not perfect at everything, but incredibly good at everything."

Because this is the second year he and Trooper have competed together, their time spent training and working together put them at an advantage, he said. Constable John spends, on average, about seven hours a day with Trooper – feeding him, grooming him and tending to his everyday needs.

"Trooper and I have a unique bond right now," he said. "He trusts me, and the idea that he trusts me allows me to push him a little bit."

He also credited the rest of his team for the NAPEC victory. "The biggest prize for us when we go down there is to win first place as a team," he said. "It shows everyone that, you know what, all our horses are great. That's what we're about."

But Constable John's secret weapon in Virginia? Candy canes.

"He absolutely loves them. ... You give him some, and he'll start to pat you down to give you more," he said of Trooper.

"I took a couple down – quietly."

(Globe and Mail)

THURSDAY OCTOBER 17, 2013

Oct 17 2013

OTTAWA - The RCMP has still not hired the staff needed to help work through its backlog of access to information requests, even though approval for the extra bodies came seven months ago.

The federal information commissioner first told Global News in August that the RCMP had stopped responding to people using access-to-information legislation to obtain documents.

At the time, a spokesman with the RCMP said the force's commissioner had approved increased funding and staffing levels for the access request branch this past March, but that only some of the positions had been filled.

The message today is the same.

"Some of these positions have already been staffed, and it is anticipated that the rest will be staffed in the near future," spokeswoman Sgt. Julie Gagnon wrote in an email this week.

Once those positions are filled, Gagnon said she is confident the extra bodies, coupled with the increased funding, will "result in immediate improvements."

When asked, the spokeswoman didn't provide a timeline for when the force expects to fill the remaining jobs.

Some details of what Information Commissioner Suzanne Legault knows about the RCMP's troubles with fulfilling their legal obligation under the legislation were published in her annual report to Parliament Thursday.

The report reveals administrative complaints against the RCMP, which include complaints regarding timeliness and cost, more than tripled between 2011-12 and 2012-13.

The national police force is also ranked second on a list of the top 15 institutions responsible for new complaints to the commissioner's office, jumping up from fourth place the previous year.

"The RCMP was so understaffed that it was unable to even acknowledge receipt of access requests within the 30 days in which it should have," Legault wrote in her report. "We have held a number of meetings with the RCMP, and it has put a plan into place to respond to our concerns."

The commissioner's office says it will monitor the effectiveness of that plan.

In August, the commissioner said what she has seen with the RCMP is unprecedented, despite a slew of other problems she says are slowly corroding the access system.

Failing to respond to people using the system is a failure to respect the most basic obligations of the act, Legault said.

Canada's access laws give all Canadians the right to access records the government holds, subject to certain exemptions; the laws have been described as essential to democratic accountability.

Despite those certain exemptions, federal institutions are legally obliged to acknowledge receipt of all requests and confirm each will be processed and responded to within 30 days.

The act permits for extensions beyond the initial 30 days, within reason. Any requester who feels their rights under the act have not been honoured can complain to Legault's office, which can take departments to court, but doesn't have the power to compel any action.

The RCMP, meanwhile, hasn't even been completing the first step of the process, neglecting to send receipts of acknowledgment, Legault said.

RCMP spokeswoman Gagnon, however, stressed that the work is still happening behind the scenes.

"We feel it is necessary to clarify that the RCMP has not stopped responding to ATI requests," an email read.

The force saw a significant increase in the volume and complexity of requests received during 2012-13, including a 274 per cent increase in the number of pages reviewed compared to the previous year, she wrote.

That year, Gagnon said, the RCMP processed and completed 823 requests.

"Of the total number of access to information and privacy requests received, the RCMP was late in acknowledging approximately three per cent within the 30-day time-frame required," Gagnon wrote. "But we can assure you that we have not stopped responding to any request."

(Shaw Media)

Oct 17 2013

REXTON, N.B. - The RCMP say they are enforcing a court injunction issued against shale gas protesters blocking a highway in eastern New Brunswick.

Const. Jullie Rogers-Marsh says Route 134 near Rexton is closed, as is a section of Highway 11 between Rexton and Sainte-Anne-de-Kent.

She says the Mounties moved in around 7:30 a.m. today, but she couldn't say how many officers were involved or how many protesters were at the site.

The injunction was granted earlier this month to end the blockade of a SWN Resources compound.

The protesters, who include members of the Elsipogtog First Nation, want the energy company to stop seismic testing and leave the province.

Last week, Premier David Alward and Chief Arren Sock agreed to set up a working group to find a resolution and the RCMP hadn't enforced the injunction.