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A Chronicle of News for the Law Enforcement Community |

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Executive Digest

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BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

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Ontario child-porn investigation goes international



May 06 2015

Dozens of suspects, including some as young as 12, have been arrested in connection with a child pornography investigation that began in southern Ontario and spanned many countries.

Details of the investigation - known as Project Hydra - were revealed by York Regional Police on Wednesday.

"Our project began with one child victim in York Region and through investigation has grown into a significant international project with thousands of potential victims," Inspector Tim Kelly said. "The investigation is ongoing and continues to grow with every stone that is overturned."

Police said 41 suspects have been arrested and 110 charges have been laid in North America. The charges include possession, distribution and accessing of child pornography. Seventeen of the suspects were arrested in Canada.

The investigation began in April last year after the Ottawa-based National Child Exploitation Co-ordination Centre told York Regional Police about images of child pornography that were uploaded from a residence in York Region.

After executing a search warrant at the residence, investigators learned that a young person had allegedly uploaded the images.

"The young person advised investigators that they had been chatting, sending and receiving child pornography with unknown people throughout the world via popular

social networking websites and private chat rooms," Kelly said.

"Investigators learned that the young person had been a victim of child exploitation and had been coerced into providing self exploited images to the unknown people online."

That finding opened the door to a much larger operation.

Police contacted owners of the website used by the young person and identified suspects around the world who were exchanging child pornography through the use of cloud storage.

York region police then collaborated with the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, INTERPOL, the RCMP, the OPP and various other forces across Canada, many of whom launched parallel investigations.

Part of the efforts of York Region police included the creation of 356 investigative packages - containing screenshots of online chats, child sexual abuse images and locations of suspects - which were distributed to police agencies in 17 different countries to allow forces to take action in their own jurisdiction.

Investigators found that the child pornography victims ranged in age from infants to teenagers and were male and female.

"The abusers appear to be people the victims trusted or online predators that coerced the victim into creating child sexual abuse materials," Kelly said. "Investigators are

continuing to use all resources available to identify any further victims.”

Nineteen victims have been identified so far, police said, emphasizing that the collaboration across multiple forces was a key element in the operation’s progress.

“The success of Project Hydra in identifying such a large number of offenders involved in the victimization of children across the world could not have occurred without the co-operation of all agencies committed to the investigation of such offences against children - the most fragile victims of crime,” Kelly said.

Meanwhile, as a result of information uncovered during Project Hydra, RCMP in New Brunswick started an investigation that resulted in the arrest of a man who allegedly pretended to be a teenaged girl online and lured as many as 2,000 boys.

Police say the 24-year-old Moncton man, who cannot be named because of a court ordered publication ban, is facing several sex offences after allegedly luring boys between the ages of 10 and 16 from at least January, 2012, to last fall.

The Mounties say the man allegedly contacted the boys through live video chats of various social media sites including Skype, Facebook, Omegle and Vichatter.

Sergeant JeanMarc Pare of the RCMP’s Internet Child Exploitation Unit said a video of a teenage girl that appeared to be live was used to persuade the boys to undress and initiate sex acts, which were taped and distributed on the Internet.

There are alleged victims worldwide, including in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia and Russia, he said.

“I’ve seen large numbers of images and videos seized, and I’ve seen a lot of victims on our cases, but in terms of video evidence of victims this was quite large,” Pare said Wednesday.

“We’re talking somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 victims.”

Investigators say it’s possible that some boys may not be aware they were victimized and police are urging potential victims to come forward.

Pare said police in Moncton secured a search warrant in December and seized computers and storage devices.

The man appeared in Moncton provincial court in February and was charged with making child pornography, possessing child pornography, making available child pornography, touching a person under the age of 14 for a sexual purpose, and sexual assault. He was remanded to custody.

The RCMP have posted a video on the Web asking the public and police departments around the world to share it on social media in an effort to reach as many potential victims as possible. Pare said police have already received a number of calls, but would not say what information was received.

THURSDAY APRIL 30, 2015

Apr 30 2015

TORONTO - A thick shroud of secrecy around part of a court case that may have links to Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s private life will stay in place for secret reasons, an Ontario judge ruled Thursday.

In her decision, Superior Court Justice Mary Vallee said her sealing order of last December must stand and none of the information can be released.

“All of the information in those materials and the (sealing) order relates to a subject matter which must be protected from disclosure,” her ruling states.

“Because the subject matter must be protected, I am not at liberty to describe the nature of the subject matter or why it must be protected.”

The unusual circumstances arose in December during a civil suit involving allegations of harassment within the RCMP filed by Sgt. Peter Merrifield, who alleges senior officers ruined his career after he launched an unsuccessful bid to run for the federal Conservatives in 2005.

In December, Merrifield called “Witness X” to testify but the proceedings went in-camera and Vallee ordered material related to the hearing sealed, including a copy of her sealing order itself.

The National Post, citing sources, has reported the material at issue includes four letters sent by private investigator Derrick Snowdy to assistant RCMP commissioner Stephen White, and the letters contain allegations the RCMP leaked private information about Harper’s family.

The federal government maintains that Section 37 of the Canada Evidence Act - sometimes used in terrorist cases - allows for confidentiality where openness would encroach on the public interest.

Apr 30 2015

MONTREAL - The Quebec government has given the green light to a project to introduce several facilities in Montreal where drug users can legally and safely inject themselves.

Junior public health minister Lucie Charlebois announced today the provincial government has approved a plan to open a supervised drug-injection site in three community centres, along with a mobile injection site.

The project is still far from becoming a reality, however, because Ottawa still has to give its consent.

The federal government is on its way to passing a new law amending the Criminal Code to allow for spaces where users can legally inject drugs, but only under exceptional circumstances.

Canada’s only legal, operating safe-injection site is in Vancouver and opened in 2003.

Charlebois said safe-injection sites reduce the risk of drug overdoses and offer other social and health benefits.

Apr 30 2015

VANCOUVER - A second Mountie has been acquitted of perjury stemming from a public inquiry into Robert Dziekanski’s death at Vancouver’s airport.

Const. Gerry Rundel was charged with lying during his testimony at the inquiry related to the Polish immigrant’s death in October 2007.

Const. Bill Bentley was acquitted of the perjury charge in 2013, though the Crown is appealing the verdict.

Former corporal Benjamin (Monty) Robinson was convicted last month of the same charge while Const. Kwesi Millington was convicted in February and is awaiting a sentencing hearing.

The four officers were summoned to the airport when Dziekanski started throwing furniture in the international terminal, and one of them stunned him repeatedly with a Taser.

The Crown alleged the officers colluded on a story to tell homicide investigators and then lied at the inquiry to explain why their initial accounts contradicted an amateur video. (CKNW.)


Apr 30 2015

ATLANTA - Police officers in Atlanta fatally shot a woman who first fired at them while sitting in the back of a patrol car Thursday, authorities said.

Two officers were investigating a call about a stolen car Thursday afternoon when they saw a woman sitting inside the vehicle in a parking deck, said Major Darin Schierbaum.

He said they took the woman into custody and put her in a patrol car, and that at one point she fired at least two shots at the officers. Schierbaum said the officers returned fire, critically wounding her. She later died at a hospital, he said.

Schierbaum said it’s unclear how the woman was able to fire a gun while in the patrol car and that police are investigating



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whether she had been handcuffed. Her identity wasn't released. The two officers weren't injured, Department spokesman Greg Lyon said.

Police are looking for surveillance footage from the surrounding area, Schierbaum said. The shooting happened outside a downtown Atlanta precinct.

Apr 30 2015

OTTAWA - Funding for a key federal criminal database is dropping this year, posing risks to public safety and police officers, critics say.



"It's incredibly important that the funding is there and the administration of the database is meeting expectations," said Tom Stamatakis, national president of the Canadian Police Association. "It's important for not only police officers so they can be effective in their communities, but also from a public safety perspective."

The database is one of a handful of programs that fall under the RCMP's budget line for Canadian law enforcement services, which has dropped 26 per cent, to \$177.9 million in 2015-16 from \$241.1 million in 2014-15, according to the federal government's main estimates.

The police force told Global News this drop was because the criminal intelligence unit was moved to another budget line, but not because "of a reduction in funding levels with the Canadian law enforcement services, such as CPIC."

While the shift accounts for a bulk of the decrease, CPIC's funding dropped from \$6.5 million to \$5.9 million this year, marking a nearly 10 per cent decrease. The RCMP says the cut is on account of "efficiencies garnered" through an automated system.

"This change does not impact the direct operations of CPIC," an RCMP spokesperson wrote in an email response to Global News.

Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney, whose department oversees the RCMP, said he has been assured the national police force has sufficient resources to meet the needs of Canada's law enforcement officials. In the meantime, there is no threat to the safety of Canadians, he said.

Ottawa has earmarked more than \$180 million to help modernize the criminal records system that is part of CPIC since the federal auditor general first flagged the risks of the backlog six years ago, the RCMP said.

This modernization has been slowly taking place over the past few years, a spokesperson wrote in an email.

"When fully implemented, the new system

will automate criminal record updates, minimizing delays and preventing future backlogs in the national repository," Sgt. Julie Gagnon wrote.

The national police have years of data to input before the backlog is cleared. The RCMP has said that should happen by March 2017.

"I'm hopeful it's up to speed long before that. It should be a priority for the RCMP even though they're faced with many other challenges," Stamatakis said, sympathetic to the expanding mandate of the national police force.

"It's critical and we don't have a choice but to rely on CPIC. I think the priority for all of us involved in policing in this country is to ensure that the maintenance of CPIC data is a priority not only for the RCMP, but the federal government."

(Global News)

Apr 30 2015

In an apparent cost-cutting move, the provincial government is moving its OPP search and rescue helicopter from the Greater Sudbury Airport to Orillia.

Nickel Belt MPP France Gelinis condemned the move in the provincial legislature on Thursday.

"Mr. Speaker," she told MPPs, "I cannot stress enough what a short-sighted decision this is. Orillia is a one hour and twenty minute flight from Sudbury and there is already an OPP's search and rescue helicopter

there. From November to March, the Orillia helicopter base is subjected to almost daily, 'lake effect' limiting the flight opportunities. Whereas the Sudbury helicopter base is exceptionally good for flying with predominantly clear weather all year round.

"The Sudbury base has been so successful that they received a new Eurocopter EC135 helicopter in 2011 to replace their Twin Star helicopter that opened the base in 91. Since the search and rescue helicopter was stationed in Sudbury, aircraft and aircrew have literally been responsible for saving hundreds of lives, responding to calls for service from a wide variety of policing agencies throughout Northern Ontario, in fact Mr. Speaker, helicopters based Sudbury fly as far as Thunder Bay to help with search and rescue.

Gelinis said the Sudbury OPP detachment has had a helicopter stationed at Sudbury airport to assist in local search and rescue operations since 1991.

"Mr. Speaker why do we want to move these helicopters farther away from their target operational areas to an airbase that is less reliable?"

Ontario Provincial Police spokesperson Sgt. Carolle Dionne told CBC Radio the decision will save the service \$254,000 a year.

(Sudbury Star)

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

May 01 2015

SASKATOON - A police service dog that specialized in bomb detection has been struck and killed on a Saskatoon street.

The two-year-old dog, named Matrix, died Thursday night.

Police say the canine and his handler were getting ready for training in a field behind a cemetery in the city's north end when the animal was struck by a vehicle.

He died soon after.

It wasn't immediately clear why the dog was on the road.

Matrix had been on active duty since last August, and was also used in general police calls.

May 01 2015

OTTAWA - The Security Intelligence Review Committee, the watchdog that keeps an eye on Canada's spy agency, will be led by Pierre Blais, a former solicitor general and recently retired chief justice of the Federal Court of Appeal.

The Prime Minister's Office also announced the appointment of former national security adviser Marie-Lucie Morin as a member of the review committee, which scrutinizes the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

Former MP Deborah Grey, who was interim chair of the review committee, is stepping down.

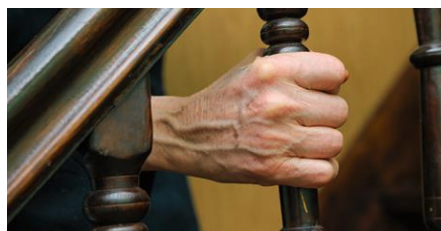
The appointment of two new members with experience in security intelligence matters follows a recent federal move to almost double the review body's annual budget.

The review committee has been beset by the sudden resignations of two chairmen in recent years as well as criticism over lingering vacancies and what many critics called insufficient resources to do the job.

The concerns only intensified following introduction of anti-terrorism legislation that would give CSIS new powers to actively disrupt plots, not just gather information about them.

May 01 2015

MONTREAL - For a 91-year-old Quebec woman, happiness is not having to pay a fine after a neighbour complained about a noisy chair in her apartment.



Yvette Vachon was originally slapped with a \$148 ticket after someone downstairs

called police on the evening of April 17.

The Saguenay resident was handed the ticket for violating a city bylaw on excessive noise.

"Ever since it started, I've been troubled by that (and) what was going to happen because of all that foolishness," Vachon told on Friday.

She said the noise was caused when she used her feet to close her La-Z-Boy-style chair.

"I feel very good because I can now sleep and get some rest," she said after finding out the fine would be dropped. "Before, I was unhappy and now I am happy."

Vachon has lived in the same apartment for 15 years and she said there have never been any complaints before.

She also said she's never talked to the neighbour who called police.

Vachon's lawyer, Charles Cantin, said his client pleaded not guilty during a court appearance this week and he asked the town prosecutor to send him the evidence.

"After analyzing the dossier, the prosecutor decided the complaint would not go any further... and the ticket was completely cancelled," he said Friday.

Cantin said police visited Vachon's apartment - without checking the facts - and issued the ticket based on what the neighbour said.

The neighbour complained that Vachon made a lot of noise with her chair and as she walked around her apartment.

"I went there and there was no excessive noise (and) no way to make any," said Cantin, adding she weighs 90 pounds.

"I think it sends a message to all peace officers that they make certain verifications before issuing a ticket - whether it's a municipal bylaw or highway safety or all other laws."

After talking to his client, Cantin described Vachon as "one of the happiest women alive today."

Vachon turned 91 on April 4.

May 01 2015

WETASKIWIN, Alta. - A judge has found a man accused of shooting two RCMP officers in rural Alberta not guilty of all charges.



Sawyer Robison, 30, was facing attempted murder, assault causing bodily harm and weapons-related charges.

Constables Sheldon Shah and Sidney Gaudette were wounded while trying to search a farmhouse near Killam, southeast of Edmonton, in February 2012.

"I am simply not satisfied that the inference the Crown has asked me to draw is the only one that can be drawn," said Judge Eric Macklin.

"I cannot find that he was a party to the offence."

Robison's defence lawyer has argued that it was Robison's uncle, Brad Clarke, who had a gun in each hand and who shot the officers before killing himself.

The defence noted that there was no forensic evidence that linked Robison to either of two guns found in the home and that both officers testified that Robison was not armed when they entered the farmhouse.

But the Crown said bullet patterns were so erratic there had to be a second shooter. Prosecutors also pointed to evidence found on Robison's computer, including one document with the heading: When Is It OK to Shoot a Cop?

Shah testified during the trial that he jumped between his partner and a gun pointing out of a doorway, and took numerous bullets along his left side.

Gaudette was shot once in the torso.

Following a standoff, Clarke, 53, was found dead in the kitchen.

Evidence photos show he had a head wound and two handguns were next to his body. Police believe he may have been having a bath before the shooting.

RCMP alleged at the time that Robison had fled the home in a pickup truck following the shooting. He was arrested three days later on a rural road after his parents pleaded for him to turn himself in.

Robison was charged with second-degree murder in the death of his uncle, but that charge was discontinued during a preliminary hearing.

May 01 2015

EDMONTON - Two Edmonton Police Service officers were acquitted of assault Friday after a judge decided their use of force in a 2012 arrest was justified.

Provincial court Judge Brad Kerby found Const. Barry Fairhurst, 37, and Const. David Olsson, 39, not guilty after concluding that punches and kicks were necessary to control and arrest Mark Gamroth in the early morning of Sept. 4, 2012.

"The stun blows and kicks applied in an attempt to put Mr. Gamroth under arrest, all those blows were not of unnecessary force or excessive," Kerby said. "Both of the officers' actions were authorized by law."

On Friday morning, both the prosecution and defence argued the case came down to credibility. Kerby rejected Gamroth's evidence after he admitted lying on the witness stand about whether he'd read court documents related to the case.

Though Fairhurst's testimony differed from his original notes, Kerby told court he believed the officer was a "credible, truthful and reliable witness."

The night of the arrest, the officers arrived at Gamroth's east-Edmonton home to investigate a report that he drunkenly drove home after an argument at his daughter's house that ended with a 911 call.

Gamroth testified he was angry and beligerent with police, but denied he posed any physical threat before he was “sucker-punched” by one of the officers, then beaten as he tried to protect himself.

Fairhurst told court Gamroth was so aggressive that officers feared for their safety and force was necessary to arrest him for public intoxication. Fairhurst struck Gamroth in the face the first time, the officer said, after Gamroth smacked his hand away during the arrest.

“It was the most difficult altercation I’ve ever been involved with as a police officer,” Fairhurst said. “He was extremely agitated. I did not feel safe at all.”

The two officers struck Gamroth while he was on the ground, and again when he was handcuffed.

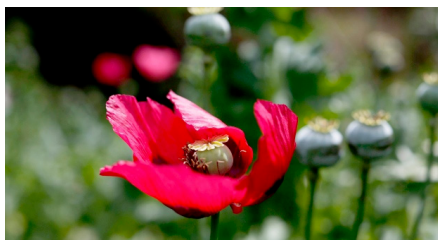
Gamroth was charged with resisting arrest after the incident. That charge has since been withdrawn.

(Edmonton Journal)

SUNDAY MAY 3, 2015

May 03 2015

OTTAWA - The RCMP has voiced concerns to Health Canada about an Alberta company's plans to cultivate opium poppies over fears the medicinal project could attract drug-peddling criminals.



Lethbridge-based API Labs Inc. says it understands the national police force's worries, but insists the risk of criminal involvement can be managed with the proper precautions.

An internal RCMP memo reveals the national police force expressed its reservations about API Labs' activities during a conference call with several other federal agencies in April last year.

It says the RCMP followed up with a letter to a senior Health Canada official outlining the force's concerns about the possible diversion of opium poppy material to “the illicit market” as well as infiltration by organized crime groups.

API Labs is trying to lay the groundwork for a western Canadian poppy industry that would see harvested plants refined into medicinal opiates - such as morphine, codeine and oxycodone - and the poppy seeds sold to bakeries.

May 03 2015

TORONTO - An annual remembrance ceremony took place today to remember fallen police officers from across Ontario.



This morning, 257 names were read on the lawn of Queens Park during the 16th annual ceremony as officers from across the province came to pay their tributes.

The names of three officers were added to the wall of honour this year.

Constable Joseph Prevett, 50, suffered a massive heart attack while participating in a joint training exercise in Gravenhurst.

Corporal Matthew David James Dinning was deployed to Afghanistan and was killed when his crew struck an IED on the roadway.

Constable John Acton was killed in 1907 when he was badly beaten making an arrest in a laneway in Toronto.

The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Elizabeth Dowdeswell, and Premier Kathleen Wynne were both in attendance today.

The CN Tower will be lit in blue on Sunday night to honour the fallen officers. (CTV Toronto)

MONDAY MAY 4, 2015

May 04 2015

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. - Police in Newfoundland are setting up an online registry for people with autism.

The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary says it is working with the provincial Autism Society to create the voluntary registry.

Police say it will give them quick access to information about a registered person with autism, including contacts, physical descriptions, known routines or their special needs.

Scott Crocker of the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador says it can help officers talk to people with autism or those dealing with them in an emergency.

The program is being launched and implemented in St. John's.

Police and first responders in other Canadian cities have similar programs in place.

May 04 2015

NEW YORK - A 25-year-old police officer shot in the head while attempting to stop a man suspected of carrying a handgun died Monday from his injuries, the third New York City officer slain on duty in five months.

Brian Moore, who was in a coma after

undergoing brain surgery following the Saturday evening shooting, was pronounced dead at a Queens hospital with his family, including his police officer father, uncle and cousin, at his bedside.

Hundreds of uniformed officers stood at attention outside the hospital and lined up down the block to salute the ambulance carrying his body. Afterward, many could be seen crying and consoling one another.

“He proved himself to be an exceptional young officer,” Police Commissioner William Bratton said, noting Moore had made more than 150 arrests in less than five years on the job and earned meritorious service medals.

Moore and his partner were in plain-clothes and in an unmarked police car when they approached Demetrius Blackwell in a quiet Queens neighbourhood after they saw him adjusting his waistband, a move that made them suspicious he had a handgun, authorities said.

The officers pulled up next to Blackwell, 35, and exchanged words before the man suddenly turned, pulled out a weapon and fired at least twice at them, striking Moore in the head and face, according to court documents.

Blackwell has been charged with attempted murder and other crimes. He is being held without bail and has not entered a plea. He will be charged with first-degree murder, prosecutors said.

May 04 2015

LONDON - He has a “wicked sense of humour,” police board chair Jeanette Eberhard said more than once, when introducing new London police Chief John Pare.



On Monday, an audience that included former chiefs, the London police colour guard and Pare's family members, got a glimpse of that humour shortly after he was sworn in.

While thanking Ontario Court Justice Jeanine Leroy, who administered the oath of office, Pare noted he had been cross examined by Leroy many times when she was a defence lawyer and he a lower-ranking officer.

“We’re not going to talk about the (outcomes of those trials) . . . It’s not about winning or losing, it’s about the administration of justice,” he said as the audience chuckled.

“I was very comfortable to know that today there weren’t any surprise questions, and you stuck to the script,” he said to Leroy.

Meanwhile rank-and-file officers are likely

hoping Pare sticks to his own script after a speech in which he expressed gratitude to the members of the force and appeared willing to listen to their concerns.

Giving attention to an ongoing complaint among officers, who often complain about unflexible scheduling and the toll policing takes on their family lives, Pare said a work-life fit is a priority to him.

"Work-life fit is an important factor for our sworn and civilian members in terms of being ready and able to tackle what can often be difficult and trying work," he said. "... given the nature of our work, it will be important to ensure we have the appropriate support for our members' physical and psychological well-being, for you are our most valued resource."

Pare also vowed to continue efforts to diversify the force and make it more representative of the community.

(London Free Press)

May 04 2015

CALGARY - A Calgary judge says there is no indication former Alberta justice minister Jonathan Denis assaulted his estranged wife.

As a result, Justice Craig Jones has lifted an emergency protection order granted to Breanna Palmer last month.

Denis resigned the Alberta cabinet the day after the order was granted.

The judge has also lifted a publication ban on details of the case.

May 04 2015

Montreal police say they are investigating after a video surfaced showing a man seemingly being hit in the face by officers during Friday's May Day protest.

The video, obtained by CBC News and only a few seconds long, shows an arrest already in progress as three officers are trying to subdue a man who is resisting.

In the video, the officers are holding the man's arms while another punches him several times, with a couple of punches landing around the man's face.

The officers then lift the man in the air and bring him down.

CBC News reported the man who shot the video, Clauderic St-Amand, said the protester looked as though he was separated from the larger anti-capitalist protest in downtown Montreal and was sitting on a street corner before police intervened.

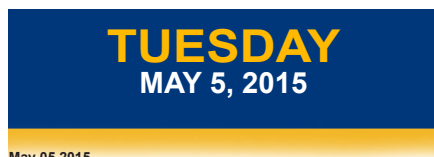
Montreal police spokesman Ian Lafreniere told CBC on Monday the force is investigating and trying to identify the officers in the video.

Hundreds of protesters took to the streets Friday evening in downtown Montreal for the annual protests celebrating International Workers' Day, also known as May Day.

This year's protest turned violent with protesters and police clashing for hours in the city's downtown core.

Five people, including two police offic-

ers, were treated for minor injuries while 27 people were arrested and face various charges including illegally gathering and assaulting a police officer.



OHSWEKEN - Six Nations tobacco businesses and traditional government representatives are firming up details to regulate the industry while the community waits to see when a new law criminalizing contraband tobacco will be tested.



It's been nearly a month since Bill C-10 came into effect, criminalizing the trafficking of contraband tobacco. The law has been heralded by police, tobacco companies and safety groups as a tool to curb illegal tobacco.

But for First Nations, including Six Nations, it has been viewed as an unfair attack on their rights. It's estimated more than 2,000 jobs on the local reserve are tied to their tobacco industry, through large-scale production and small "mom and pop" shops.

In February, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council - the area's traditional government - voted on a draft self-regulation framework for Six Nations tobacco manufacturers.

The proposal includes a seven-member oversight board that would write bylaws, including possibly setting minimum prices. Licensed businesses would be required to follow rules, such as not selling to minors, and pay fees into a fund to support businesses in trouble.

Meanwhile, Bill C-10 is yet to be seriously tested and it remains unclear what will happen if an investigation leads police to Six Nations or another reserve.

Six Nations Police Chief Glenn Lickers has been quoted as saying his officers will not enforce the new law. The service did not return a call for comment.

Provincial police recognize that enforcing the law "is very complex," said spokesperson Sgt. Peter Leon. However, the service "supports the legislative changes that can be used to reduce smuggling, and the sale of contraband tobacco."

(Hamilton Spectator)

May 05 2015

Forty volunteers affiliated to the Canadian Police Service are in Jamaica on a humanitarian mission offering assistance to Missionaries of the Poor and the Jessie Ripoll Primary School in Kingston.



Four members of the group, all with Jamaican roots, headed by Jamaican-born Winnipeg Police Chief Devon Clunis, voiced great optimism and satisfaction at being able to assist.

"We want to give back, we want to share the knowledge we have gained in Canada," said York Regional Police (YRP) D/Chief Andre Crawford, also Jamaican-born.

According to Crawford, assistance to the Jamaican cause started some time ago through another officer who was killed in a car crash in Canada.

"Knowing his legacy and what he was passionate about, the York Service decided to take on the effort with the same passion," Crawford said.

"Since then, we have been coming down to assist. We've been coming here for the past seven years to support the Missionaries of the Poor at Mount Tabor. We come down and build chicken pens, whatever we are able to do. Two years ago we installed solar panels at the mission," said Crawford.

The other two guests, YRP inspector Keith Merith was born in England to Jamaican parents and Toronto Police Service inspector Sonia Thompson, was born in Canada, also to Jamaican parents.

"One of the exciting parts about coming back to Jamaica is actually doing the humanitarian mission at Mount Tabor," said Merith, who added that he visits relatives here at least three times per year.

"Last year I had an opportunity to meet with Father Ho Lung and we spoke extensively about the challenges, [so] it was incumbent on me to go back and engage other members to become part of that and bring more people down," Merith said.

Meanwhile, Chief Clunis said that the choice of Jessie Ripoll Primary School for assistance came through interaction with the Canadian High Commission in Kingston.

"We didn't want to come here and start our own thing; we wanted to join people here, so we liaised with the high commission to identify initiatives we could work on locally," Clunis said.

Work includes painting of the school, installation of an air-conditioning unit and refurbishing of the library and is scheduled for completion before Saturday, the day before the 40-strong contingent is scheduled to return home.

"This effort is 100 per cent self-funded, each member of the 40 of us paid our own way," Chief Clunis said.

"This is my vacation," Crawford interjected. (Jamaica Observer)

May 05 2015

PERTH-ANDOVER, N.B. - A New Brunswick man has been charged with assault with a weapon and leaving the scene of an accident after he allegedly ran into police officers on an all-terrain vehicle.



RCMP in Perth-Andover say the 35-year-old man is also facing a charge of criminal flight causing harm.

Police say they saw two people on an ATV without helmets in a parking lot on Saturday.

They allege that when the officers approached, the driver fled and hit a parked car, a police car and two officers.

Both officers were taken to hospital with minor injuries and were released.

Police say the man was in provincial court Monday and has been released on conditions before his next appearance on May 26.

May 05 2015

TORONTO - The province is building a 112-bed facility on the grounds of the Elgin Middlesex Detention Centre to address capacity issues and improve safety for inmates and staff.

The building will be a regional intermittent centre to deal with inmates who have an intermittent sentence of 90 days or less that is served in segments of time - typically weekends - rather than all at once.

It will feature a separate entrance for inmates serving intermittent sentences which will prevent contraband from being brought into the main facility.

The building will also have security features that include electronically secured doors, locks and windows, as well as hallways with uninterrupted sight lines. It will be connected to the main facility by a walkway.

The province says the new \$8.5 million, 2,300-square-metre all-male facility is scheduled to open in late 2015.

Overcrowding in Ontario's jails has been a growing concern, particularly as it appears to have been accompanied by a rise in cell-block violence.

May 05 2015

HALIFAX - Nova Scotia's Justice Department has confirmed there is a connection between the delivery of suspicious packages to five courthouses in the province and similar deliveries in Manitoba in April.

Spokesman Andrew Preeper says packages arrived today at courthouses in Bridgewater, Kentville, Truro and Halifax.

On Monday, four employees of a courthouse in Amherst were released from hospital after complaining of nausea, dizziness and burning to the throat after a suspicious package was delivered there.

There are no reports of illnesses in the latest incidents and all tests for dangerous chemicals were negative.

The department says the packages came from Asia and the remainder of the province's justice centres have been put on alert.

Similar packages were received April 8 at provincial court buildings in Winnipeg, Brandon, Morden and Minnedosa - all of which tested negative for dangerous substances.

May 05 2015

MIAMI - Investigators do not need a search warrant to obtain cellphone tower location records in criminal prosecutions, a federal appeals court ruled Tuesday in a closely-watched case involving the rules for changing technology.



The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, overturning a three-judge panel of the same court, concluded that authorities properly got 67 days' worth of records from MetroPCS for a Miami robbery suspect using a court order with a lower burden of proof.

In its 9-2 decision, the 11th Circuit decided the suspect had no expectation of privacy regarding records establishing his location near certain cellphone towers. The records were key evidence used to convict him of a string of armed robberies, leading to a 162-year prison sentence.

In fact, Circuit Judge Frank M. Hull wrote for the majority, it's clear that cellphone users in today's society understand how companies collect data about calls and that cell towers are a key part of that.

"We find no reason to conclude that cellphone users lack facts about the functions of cell towers or about telephone providers' recording cell tower usage," Hull wrote. "This cell tower method of call connecting does not require a different constitutional result just because the telephone company has decided to automate wirelessly."

(AP)

May 05 2015

REGINA - Northern Saskatchewan has the highest crime rate in the country compared to other northern regions, according to a report by Statistics Canada.

The report says in 2013, police-reported crime rates in northern areas of provinces doubled the south, and crime rates in the territories were seven times higher.

In Saskatchewan, almost 55,000 crimes were reported per 100,000 people in the north, compared to just over 9,000 in the south.

Co-author of the report, Mary Allen, says some of the difference can be explained by higher rates of mischief and disturbing the peace in the north.

But she says many violent crimes such as assault are also more prevalent, while robbery and extortion stand out as two offences that occur at lower rates.

The report notes that Nunavut, northern Manitoba and the Northwest Territories also had high levels crime, followed by Yukon and northern Newfoundland and Labrador.

In Ontario and Quebec, crime rates were closer to the national average.

May 05 2015

VANCOUVER - British Columbia's top court has ordered a new trial for a man convicted of killing two people, ruling that a judge should not have allowed a jury to watch a "re-enactment" video of the murders.



Robert Bradshaw was sentenced to life in prison on two counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of Laura Lamoureux and Marc Bontkes, killed five days apart in Langley and Surrey, B.C., in 2009.

The trial judge admitted a videotaped statement in which a former co-accused, Roy Thielen, described Bradshaw as the shooter in Bontkes' murder and as a participant in the death of Lamoureux.

The Crown sought to include the video in Bradshaw's trial when Thielen refused to testify, after being allowed to plead guilty to two counts of second-degree murder.

Thielen had been the target of an undercover police operation during which he initially took full responsibility for the killings before later implicating Bradshaw.

A B.C. Court of Appeal decision says the trial judge should not have admitted the video because it did not meet the high threshold of trustworthiness needed to allow hearsay evidence.

May 05 2015

MONTREAL - A Quebec town has made it illegal to insult a police officer or any of its municipal employees on the Internet.

Under a local bylaw, anyone who insults municipal employees in Granby could be fined between \$100 and \$1,000 for a first offence.

It ranges from \$200 to \$2,000 for a second offence.

"For at least 20 years, we've had an article in a municipal regulation that forbids anyone from provoking, insulting, blaspheming or molesting a peace officer or a municipal officer in the exercise of their functions," deputy mayor Robert Riel said in an interview Tuesday.

On Monday, town council unanimously approved an addition to the bylaw to include insults that show up on the Internet or social media.

Riel said Granby, which is about 80 kilometres east of Montreal, is the first Quebec town to have a bylaw that extends to the Internet.

Riel said the tougher regulation stems from a French Facebook account that was set up more than two years ago that referred to the "zealous police of Granby." The site disappeared a few weeks ago after an article appeared in a local newspaper.

Insulting people online is no different than insulting someone who is standing right in front of you, he argued.

"If, for example, on Facebook or Skype or elsewhere, I write on my keyboard it's almost like I'm directly attacking you," Riel said.

"The municipal council is there to protect our municipal employees and we can't accept that people are using social networks to tarnish them and their families."

He added he understands lawyers might argue about freedom of expression.

"We have a right to express ourselves, but there are things that not acceptable," Riel said, citing online intimidation.

"That has to stop...I think our government leaders have to put their foot down."

May 05 2015

SPOKANE, Wash. - Police say a northern Idaho officer shot by a man who stole his patrol car has died of his injuries.

Coeur d'Alene Police Sgt. Christie Wood says Sgt. Greg Moore died Tuesday evening. Moore was shot early Tuesday after checking on a suspicious person in a neighbourhood.

Police arrested a 26-year-old man after a car chase that reached speeds of 125 mph. Jonathan Renfro appeared in court Tuesday and was ordered held on \$2 million bail.

May 05 2015

EDMONTON - Six-year city of Edmonton police officer is charged with assault following a June arrest.

Const. Nathan Downing was charged Tuesday with one count of assault causing

bodily harm in relation to an on-duty arrest on June 10.

The constable has been removed from frontline patrol duties, says a statement from cops released late Tuesday afternoon.

The charge follows an in-depth investigation by the city police professional standards branch which was subsequently reviewed by Alberta Justice.

(Edmonton Sun)

May 05 2015

BALTIMORE - One of the Baltimore police officers who arrested Freddie Gray wants the police department and prosecutor to produce a knife that was the reason for the arrest, saying in court papers that it is an illegal weapon.



The city's top prosecutor, Marilyn Mosby, said Friday in charging the officer and five others -- three white and three black -- that the knife was legal under Maryland law, meaning they had arrested Gray illegally.

Mosby announced charges against Nero and five other officers involved in Gray's death after largely peaceful protests gave way to looting, arson and violence across Baltimore.

The motion was filed Monday by attorneys for Officer Edward Nero in Baltimore District Court.

Nero is charged with second-degree assault, misconduct in office and false imprisonment - all charges that can only be proven if Gray was wrongly arrested, said Andy Alperstein, a Baltimore attorney who has represented police officers but is not involved in the Gray case. If the knife was legal, "there is no case" against Nero and another officer because those charges all depend on the arrest being unlawful, he said.

"If the facts were that the knife was illegal than the Gray arrest would be justified. Even if it wasn't illegal and the officers acted in good faith, it would be the same result. All charges fail," Alperstein said.

Marc Zayon, Nero's attorney, argues in his motion that the knife in Gray's pocket - described in charging documents as "a spring assisted, one hand operated knife" - is illegal under both Baltimore's switchblade ordinance and state law. Gray was charged under the city ordinance, which has a different definition than the state law of what constitutes a switchblade.

A city ordinance says any knife with an automatic spring or other device to open and close the blade is illegal. State law says a knife is illegal if it opens automatically by pushing a button, spring or other device in the handle.

Police said officers chased Gray two blocks after making eye contact with him and subsequently found the knife in his pocket.

The Associated Press has made repeated requests to the police department for a physical description of the knife as well as photographs. Police later referred the request to the state's attorney's office.

Mosby announced the charges a day after receiving the investigative report from the police department.

Nero and Officer Garrett Miller are charged with misdemeanours.

Four others - Sgt. Alicia White, Lt. Brian Rice and officers Caesar Goodson and William Porter - are charged with felonies ranging from manslaughter to second-degree "depraved heart" murder.

Gray died April 19, one week after he received a spinal injury while in custody. Mosby said Gray was handcuffed and wearing leg restraints when he was placed face-down in the back of a police transport van. When Gray arrived at the police station roughly 45 minutes after his arrest, he was unresponsive.

WEDNESDAY
MAY 6, 2015

May 06 2015

Sexual assault nurse examiners in Nova Scotia say the nationally standardized rape kit is due for an upgrade.

The kit is paid for by RCMP and distributed to hospitals across the country. Each box arrives sealed with the same set of equipment and paper work.

Some experts argue the swabs and plastic bags inside the kit are not falling in line with today's forensic standards.

"We know that DNA can be degraded by warm, moist environments where bacteria and fungus can grow, so plastic is not always the most appropriate way to store biological evidence. So we add paper bags," said Heather Blackburn, co-ordinator of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program in Antigonish.

"We also use a different type of swab that dries faster, so that we can preserve that evidence in a better way."

Blackburn advises her staff to ignore two other steps outlined in the kit's physician's manual because they put the victim through unnecessary trauma.

"When these kits were initially created and developed, it was required to remove scalp hair - up to 80 or 100 scalp hairs from a victim for a comparative DNA sample," said Blackburn. "We no longer need to do that, and also the removal of pubic hair - we no longer need to do that, as well."

"If both the police and the emergency room physician have not done a number of kits and are not as experienced in collecting them, I could imagine that they would follow the physician's guide by the book and collect pieces of evidence that wouldn't necessarily be important to the trial or the investigation," said Blackburn.

She advises her team to modify the kit, by using different products and skipping the

steps that ask for hair pulling.

Blackburn believes it's time for a new kit.

"I definitely think it would be cost saving - not including pieces into the actual, physical kit itself that were no longer necessary," she said. "And if we could streamline our work and we were all working with the same evidence collection equipment and techniques, then that would be better for all of us, right?"

A new test kit has been developed, but the RCMP isn't saying when it will be released. (CBC News)

May 06 2015

VANCOUVER - Vancouver police are warning parents about a social media game teenagers are reportedly playing in Europe in which they dare each other to disappear for three days without telling anyone.

VPD spokesman Const. Brian Montague said early Wednesday that he was not aware of anyone vanishing in Vancouver after playing the so called Game of 72, but he warned that it's a dangerous and selfish stunt.

Not only can players cause suffering and harm to parents and other loved ones, but such a prank can take away police resources from legitimate missing persons cases.

Often, time is essential in finding missing people, and if officers are deployed to look for teenagers faking a disappearance, it means less officers are looking for kids who may be in dangerous situations.

The game, in which teenagers are dared to vanish and not be found for 72 hours, could be behind the disappearance of two teenagers in England, according to The Mirror. The news agency reported that two girls - 15 and 14 year old - went missing on Friday, setting off a massive police hunt for the pair, and were found 20 miles away from their home in Essex. A 22-year-old man has been arrested in relation to their disappearance. (Vancouver Sun)

May 06 2015

EDMONTON - An Alberta RCMP officer has been charged with several firearm-related offences.

The agency that investigates major incidents involving police says it started an investigation into serious allegations against a police officer and member of the Fort Saskatchewan RCMP detachment.

Search warrants were executed at the police officer's home on April 23.

Constable Stephen Hudson is charged with the unlawful possession of a Bushmaster .223-calibre assault rifle, a restricted weapon, and the careless storage of that assault rifle.

He is also accused of unlawful possession of a .22 calibre rifle and its careless storage.

Hudson is also charged with unlawful transfer of his RCMP 9-mm service pistol and its improper storage.

Police also seized several illegal cartridge magazines.

Hudson was brought before a Justice of the Peace and has been released on his own recognizance with conditions.

May 06 2015

OTTAWA - The federal government's controversial new anti-terrorism bill has won the approval of the House of Commons.

The Anti-Terrorism Act, also known as Bill C-51, easily passed third reading by a margin of 183 to 96, thanks to the Conservative government's majority and the promised support of the third-party Liberals.

The legislation gives the Canadian Security Intelligence Service more power to thwart suspected terrorist plots - not just gather information about them.

It also increases the exchange of federal security information, broadens no-fly list powers and creates a new criminal offence of encouraging someone to carry out a terrorist attack.

In addition, the bill makes it easier for the RCMP to obtain a peace bond to restrict the movements of suspects and extend the amount of time they can be kept in preventative detention.

Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney has said the legislation is required to keep Canadians safe from jihadi-inspired attacks like those that claimed the lives of two soldiers in attacks just days apart last October.

May 06 2015

Some RCMP officers have been drinking on the job - with their supervisors watching - as part of hands-on training to improve their skills administering breathalyzer tests.

Officers testifying in court must prove they administered the tests correctly, followed procedure and documented the encounter with standard notes.

The police say this training will make them more effective in collecting and presenting evidence.

"You don't want to be put in a position where you're standing recalling your college days because that doesn't go over very well," says former Vancouver police officer Steve Shaw, who helps to teach the course. "You want it to be clinical."

Shaw says the experience will help officers testify in court, by giving them a first-hand experience of different blood-alcohol levels.

During three days of the five-day training session, volunteer officers spend their lunch hour steadily eating pizza and pretzels as they're handed mixed drinks.

The officers drink gin, rum and vodka in quantities sometimes exceeding 10 ounces.

Their blood alcohol level is tested by trainees as it rises.

Part of the course is learning how alcohol's effects vary between people.

The head of the Yukon RCMP's traffic unit, Cpl. Shawn Pollard says many drivers are grossly impaired well before reaching the point-zero-eight legal limit.

"Everybody's a little different. Some people can have two beers and not do very well and other people have a little more and can still function quite normally," he says.

Pollard says training these 22 officers will put more police on the road who can

administer breathalyzer tests.

That could mean more tests administered, a quicker response time from police services and potentially more convictions for impaired driving.

(CBC News)

May 06 2015

The job of the Tuktoyaktuk RCMP was made a lot easier on Saturday when a suspect they were looking for rear-ended a police truck with his snowmobile.

Tuktoyaktuk RCMP got a call about an assault on May 2, and learned the suspect had driven away on a snowmobile before police arrived.

Officers were patrolling the community, looking for the suspect, when he "unexpectedly collided with the back end of the RCMP truck," according to a news release.

Tyler Green, 31, is facing nine charges including assault, assault with a weapon, assault causing bodily harm, impaired operation of a motor vehicle and dangerous driving.

(CBC News)

THURSDAY
MAY 7, 2015

May 07 2015

PETERBOROUGH - An arbitrator is expected to decide later this month whether financial compensation should be awarded to the police chief and deputy police chief because they lost their old jobs and were re-hired under the de-amalgamation of the city force.

Richard McLaren, the arbitrator, said on Wednesday after a hearing at the Holiday Inn that he'll deliver a decision no later than May 27.

The question is whether Peterborough Police Chief Murray Rodd and Deputy Chief Tim Farquharson should get compensation following the recent de-amalgamation of the police force.

Since 1998, the village of Lakefield had been a part-owner of the force; it had been called the Peterborough-Lakefield Community Police.

But at 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 31, the force ceased to exist. At midnight on Jan. 1, it was re-formed as a city-only service with Lakefield excluded.

There were no job losses: Rodd and Farquharson were automatically re-hired, to the same positions as they had held, by the new Peterborough Police Service.

But their old employer - Peterborough-Lakefield Community Police - had to dissolve for the new force to take its place. It means Rodd and Farquharson technically lost their jobs.

The arbitrator is expected to determine whether their contracts allow them compensation for that. The amount of compensation has not been publicly revealed.

(Peterborough Examiner)