

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY

March 7, 2014 – Vol. 19 No. 10

Executive Digest

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EDMONTON - Dozens of teachers, shielded behind a clear plastic door, heard the rapid fire of ammunition, smelled gunpowder and watched police demonstrate their response to a school shooting, said the sergeant who helped plan the training exercise for educators this week.

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HALIFAX - Police in Halifax are shopping for a new piece of software designed to search social media for clues that could help in investigations.

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BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

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Canadian cops about to get even busier

Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) in Canada



by Ryan Siegmund

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has decided to terminate its contractual commitment to Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) projects in Canada, effective March 31.

In a decision that would end a 20-year relationship, CSC says it no longer has \$2.2 million in its budget to support the program, which is internationally recognized for reducing recidivism rates among high-risk persons who have sexually offended.

CoSA was informed of the government's intentions last week. It believes this to be a major backward step for community safety and is urging the government to reverse the decision.



Henderson

Vandenberg

Eileen Henderson, Restorative Justice Coordinator, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario (MCCO), says police and government cannot be solely responsible for public safety. Groups like CoSA have the opportunity to be involved in building safer communities and are committed but require assistance with the resources to do that work.



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"I would certainly encourage the government to not limit their thinking around what makes communities safer to simply sentencing and incarceration as their only tools, but to look beyond that to release and a safe integration back into the community. For the most part, offenders will be returning to the community post incarceration!"

CoSA currently has more than 700 volunteers nation-wide supporting 155 former offenders.

Ed Vandenberg, CoSA Project Associate, has welcomed the opportunity to work with police, public authorities and members of the community in preventing further harm by building supportive and accountable groups around individuals who have been convicted of sexual offences.

"I'm sure the officers I've worked with at the high risk unit (Toronto Police Service) would agree that this approach toward building community with the goal of community safety in mind has produced often unexpected results in the form of lower crime rates and better relationships."

The effectiveness of the CoSA model has been studied and published in a series of peer reviewed journals. All indicate reduced rates of sexual and other re-offending among CoSA participants. These findings have helped develop CoSA project developments in the USA and UK.

Public Safety Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre was to conclude a \$7.5 million dollar national evaluation of CoSA in September 2014.

(Blue Line Magazine)

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 27, 2014

Feb 27 2014

EDMONTON - Three young men were each fined \$3,000 for pointing a laser at the Edmonton police's Air-1 helicopter in September, an unprecedented fine in Alberta.

Mohamed Cheikh-Mohamad, 19, Khaled Ahmad Safi, 20, and Mohammed El-Mustapha, 19, pleaded guilty to endangering the safety of an aircraft under the Federal Aeronautics Act in provincial court on Tuesday.

On Sept. 7, 2013, police were flying above 153rd Avenue and 117th Street in the Castle Downs area just before midnight when the pilot saw a flash of green light, Crown prosecutor Breena Smith told court. He put on protective glasses and was able to pinpoint the source. Police on the ground arrested the three men, who beamed the laser at the helicopter for two minutes.

Smith said the laser could have damaged the pilot's retina or left him with a temporary loss of vision.

It was a "continuous and relentless attack," Smith said. "It could have been catastrophic."

Smith and the defence agreed on the fine as a joint submission after considering the length of the laser strike and the risk to the officers and the public below.

In previous Alberta cases, Smith said fines of \$500 and \$1,000 were handed out for laser strikes lasting from 30 seconds to one minute. One of those happened in 2009, when a man fiddling with his son's toy laser inadvertently hit the Air-1 helicopter and was fined \$500.

Under the Aeronautics Act, the maximum penalty is \$25,000 or 18 months in prison, or both. (Edmonton Journal)

Feb 27 2014

An investigation into the RCMP's seizure of hundreds of guns from private homes evacuated during last year's flooding in southern Alberta has taken some "unexpected" turns and a final report may not be ready until June.

The Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP had previously said it hoped to be done by December.

"The investigation has taken longer than originally anticipated," commission spokesman Tim Cogan said in an email from Ottawa. "There has been significantly more documentation to go through than we expected, some of which took the investigation down a few unexpected paths."

The commission conducted more than 70 interviews during visits to the community

of High River in December and January, and now a third trip is planned for March to do another dozen interviews, Cogan said.

"At this point we anticipate completing the investigation tasks by the end of March and are aiming for a June release of the final report," he said.

Cogan declined to elaborate on what was causing the delays.

RCMP officials in Alberta have previously said that as officers were going door to door looking for stranded residents during the June floods, they came upon a number of weapons in plain sight and became concerned they could fall in the wrong hands.

But the seizure of guns infuriated many residents and even prompted the Prime Minister's Office to say that the guns should be returned to residents as soon as possible. That, in turn, caused opposition leaders to criticize the government for meddling in the operational affairs of the RCMP.

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson subsequently wrote to the complaints commission asking for an investigation to be opened. While the top Mountie said he was proud of his officers for their "heroic" acts during the crisis, he was also concerned by the "sharp criticism" related to the seizures.

Feb 27 2014

EDMONTON - Alberta's highest court has upheld a community's bylaw that bans businesses from selling marijuana paraphernalia.

The city of St. Albert passed the bylaw in 2012 after the Chad Smoke Shop opened its doors.

A Court of Queen's Bench judge in Edmonton struck down the bylaw.

Justice Terry Clackson ruled the city didn't have the legal power to pass or enforce what amounts to a criminal law.

The city appealed the decision and the Alberta Court of Appeal has ruled the bylaw is valid.

The Appeal Court says the bylaw has both federal and provincial components.

"In this case, there is significant overlap between the provincial and federal aspects of the bylaw," says the court decision released Thursday.

It says the federal government has power over criminal law, while the provinces dictate business licenses and regulations.

"Having concluded that these aspects are of roughly equal importance, we apply the double aspect doctrine for judicial restraint to uphold the validity."

The bylaw restricts businesses from displaying or offering for sale three or more "restricted products." The items include bong, vaporizers, pipes or products that display pictures of marijuana plants.

If convicted, a person faces a fine up to \$10,000 or a year in jail.

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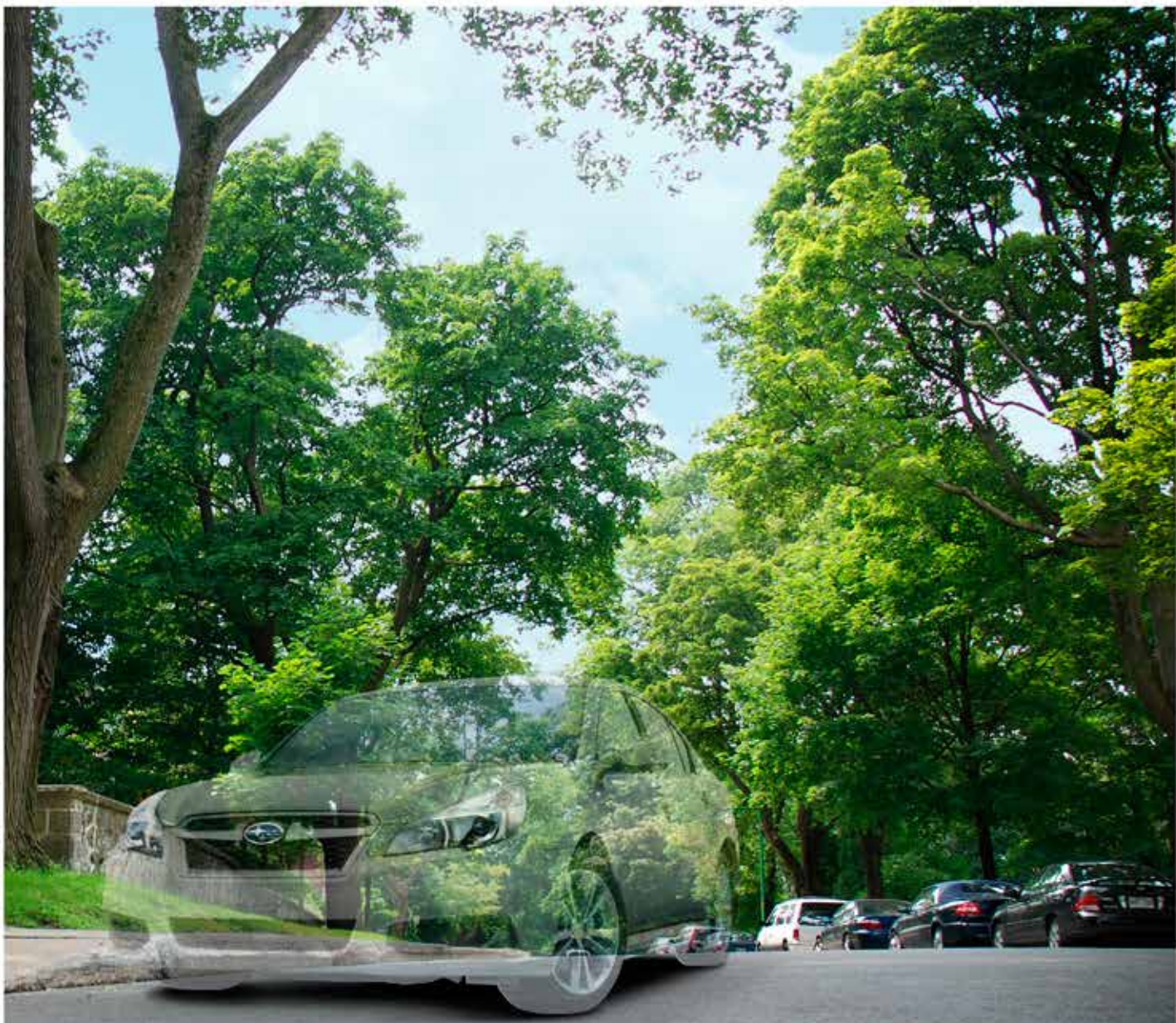
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Confidence in Motion

Feb 27 2014

MONTREAL - Bold cyber criminals posing as Microsoft technicians recently telephoned Quebec provincial police staff and persuaded them to hand over sensitive information.

Employees received an internal memo on Feb. 12, obtained by QMI Agency, in which they were asked to exercise "vigilance" following the bogus calls.

Employees were warned about "phone phishing" that was likely aimed at "stealing some of your personal information" or "trying to install a virus on your workstation."

The impostors had contacted police staff claiming to have received a report from Microsoft about a workstation virus.

Provincial police warned staff never to provide personal information to anyone.

The force tells QMI Agency that none of its computers was infected.

Quebec provincial police's own website has tips to avoid phishing, warning users to "avoid clicking on embedded links in an email."

The force also recommends victims "complain to (provincial police) or your local police department."

(QMI Agency)

Feb 27 2014

OTTAWA - The budget of Canada's electronic eavesdropping agency will almost double this year as it prepares to open swanky new Ottawa headquarters.

Estimates tabled in Parliament on Thursday show Communications Security Establishment Canada will receive \$829 million in 2014-15, up from just under \$444 million this year.

It includes a one-time increase of \$300 million for a contract payment related to delivery of the spy agency's new facility, and over \$100 million related to maintenance of the complex, built through a public-private partnership.

The headquarters includes a vast data storage unit the size of a football field, extensive new office space and a public meeting centre near the entrance to the campus.

In addition, just over \$6 million will support CSEC's mandate of gathering foreign intelligence and protecting federal computer systems.

At the same time, the budgets of several federal watchdogs will be cut.

The auditor general loses more than \$6 million and the chief electoral officer about \$18 million.

There were other losers.

The RCMP loses \$132 million, or almost five per cent from the previous year.

Feb 27 2014

EDMONTON - In a rare move, a number of Edmontonians were abruptly rounded up at a downtown transit station by sheriffs and sent to the Law Courts after a judge issued a last-minute summons to get a trial started.

More than three dozen shocked citizens were hauled in by Court of Queen's Bench Justice Terry Clackson to report for jury duty.

Blake Schoug says a sheriff asked his age, he replied he was 19, and he was handed his paperwork.

Schoug says the sheriff also apologized for the inconvenience.

Clackson made the rare move because one more juror was needed to start a trial expected to last four weeks.

Chris Cottreau says he and the rest were allowed to leave a short time after one of the women in the group was chosen to fill the juror's slot.

"They gave us a piece of paper for parking and apparently \$11 for lunch," Cottreau said.

Clackson also thanked the citizens for their co-operation.

"The exercise you have been part of is a rare occurrence," the judge said. "You'll all have something to talk about at dinner time."

(CTV Edmonton)

Feb 27 2014

EDMONTON - Since it's move out to the Villeneuve Airport Air-1 is declining calls, leaving them early and getting their too late and the Edmonton Police have a \$15 million solution in mind.

The Edmonton police helicopter moved out of City Centre Airport on Nov. 15 — when the facility closed — and into a hangar at the Villeneuve Airport.

The new location means the helicopter has a 12-minute flight time to city limits.

Insp. Gary Godziuk, who oversees the unit, said despite the best efforts of crews, the move has had a negative impact on operations.

"The state of flight-ops is not ideal with it being outside the city," he said. "It just puts more pressure on our guys. It puts more pressure on the machine."

Godziuk said the distance has sometimes meant they are taken out of action during important calls.

"If we're in the city at a call and we need to go refuel, we're out of action for 30 minutes," he said.

Godziuk said the police are preparing a business case for twin-engine helicopters to replace the current single-engine craft, but each would cost in the range of \$7.5 million.

Twin engine craft could take off vertically, which the current helicopters can't do, making it easier to find a home in city limits for them. They would also be able to carry tactical or canine-unit members.

He said he understands the scale of that investment, but the costs will only grow.

City Coun. Scott McKeen said council will have to weigh that against the whole capital budget.

(Metro Edmonton)



Feb 28 2014

SASKATOON - The Saskatoon Police Service will spend nearly \$300,000 to back up sensitive electronic data like case files and personnel information before the force makes the move to its new headquarters.

The information will be stored on massive servers at an undisclosed location offsite.

"We need something that is away from there, in case there is flood or a fire," deputy police chief Bernie Pannell said.

Police had originally planned to store the info in the old police headquarters on Fourth Avenue once they move into the new station on 25th Street. The old building and its adjacent parking lot are up for sale for \$15.6 million, meaning the servers will have to find a new home.

While all the data - that can include sensitive information like evidence and officer information - will continue to be stored at the new police station, Pannell said police need to store their backups somewhere else.

Everything is on computer now, so it makes sense to have a backup ... you don't keep them both in the same place," Pannell said.

For security reasons, he would not say where the information is being stored. Saskatoon police will now have to wait a little longer to move into their new \$122-million headquarters. Police were scheduled to move into the building in January, but that move has been postponed by several months because of construction delays.

Staff have already started moving computers and other electronic equipment. The station is expected to open sometime this spring.

The new 60,000-squarefoot four-storey building is the cornerstone of a new development in the city's north downtown.

(Star Phoenix)

Feb 28 2014

TORONTO - The province's Special Investigations Unit is probing the death of an 81-year-old Toronto man whose vehicle collided with an unmarked police car.

The crash took place around 4:45 p.m. Wednesday near York Mills and Upjohn Rds. The elderly man was taken to North York

General Hospital with serious injuries and later transferred to St. Michael's Hospital, where he died.

Employees at Bestway Donlands Cleaners — a cornerstone of Donlands and Mortimer Aves. for decades — identified the victim Friday as their boss, Peter Roniotis, who ran the family business with his two grown sons, Bill and Tom.

The SIU has assigned four investigators, one forensic investigator and one collision reconstructionist to probe the circumstances of this incident.

Feb 28 2014

OSHAWA, Ont. - Durham Regional Police held a female-only workout Thursday to help women pass a physical test required to become a police officer.

Sgt. Keith Richards says 50 per cent of women fail a physical test which they must pass before applying to become a constable.

At the same, he said, 90 per cent of male applicants pass the physical.

"Our objective is advancing people who need a leg up," Richards said.

Richards says he agrees with the current test that requires men and women to perform at the same physical standard.

"When women are out in field, Joe bad guy doesn't care who you are, what your physicality or gender is. All he will see is your uniform. He's not going to cut you a break because you're a girl," he said.

The session at Durham College pushed participants through several stations, including stairs and wall climbing, dummy pulling and resistance training.

"You are not going to see these apparatuses at another gym," said Richards.

Durham Regional Police holds three practice sessions a year and Richards says about 30 to 40 applicants take part in each session.

"I want people to go through the course multiple times," he adds. "Typically, the more times you do it the better you perform."

He says many women have passed the physical examination after completing the practice session, noting women comprise 18 per cent of the Durham force.

"A lot of women don't even go to the gym because they're afraid of the guys who are grunting, groaning and full of testosterone," Richards said.

"Now they have chance to train in a welcoming environment."

Feb 28 2014

TAMWORTH, Ont. - Ontario's police watchdog is investigating the death of a 59-year-old man in connection with a string of violent incidents near Napanee that left two men dead and a man and woman in hospital.

The Special Investigations Unit says the man who died Wednesday was a suspect in the incidents earlier that day in Tamworth, a small community north of Napanee in east-central Ontario.

Few details have been released about what happened Wednesday but provincial police have said there are six crime scenes involved.

The SIU says on Wednesday evening, an OPP officer found a vehicle about 15 kilometres north of Tamworth on Highway 15 that was apparently connected to a man wanted by police.

The agency says the officer got out of his cruiser and was approaching the vehicle when

a gunshot was heard, and that a man was found dead in the bushes a short distance away.

The SIU has assigned four investigators and two forensic investigators to probe the circumstances of the incident.

Feb 28 2014

WINNIPEG - A federal-provincial political spat has erupted over new freedoms granted to a Manitoba man found not criminally responsible for beheading a fellow passenger on a Greyhound bus.

Manitoba's senior federal cabinet minister, Shelly Glover, is criticizing a provincial Crown attorney for not opposing Vince

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Li's new privileges at a hearing earlier in the week. The privileges include Li's first unescorted trips from his mental hospital.

"The provincial decision to grant Mr. Li unescorted trips is wrong. We call upon Manitoba Attorney General Andrew Swan to appeal this decision immediately," Glover wrote in a statement Friday.

The province quickly accused Glover of trying to score political points by ignoring that politicians cannot tell Crown attorneys what to do.

"The attorney general of the province cannot, by law, intervene," acting justice minister Dave Chomiak said.

Li, 46, was found not criminally responsible for stabbing and beheading McLean, a young carnival worker, in July 2008.

The two men were strangers when Li sat next to McLean on a bus ride to Winnipeg from Edmonton. Li's attack was unprovoked - he said he heard voices telling him to kill McLean. The bus stopped and horrified passengers fled as Li carved up McLean and ate parts of his body.

Li was initially kept inside a locked wing of the Selkirk Mental Health Centre for 24 hours a day. Each year the Criminal Code Review Board has granted him more freedoms at annual hearings into his case.

Following this year's hearing, the review board agreed with three requests from Li's psychiatric team, all of which were unopposed by the Crown:

- That Li be granted unsupervised trips out of the mental hospital into the city of Selkirk.
- That supervision on trips to other communities, including Winnipeg and nearby beaches, be reduced so that Li no longer has a staff member dedicated solely to supervising him in group settings.
- That Li be moved from a secure wing of the hospital to an unlocked ward.

The Manitoba government expressed concern over the changes. Premier Greg Selinger said he is opposed to the unescorted day passes by Li.

But the review board is bound by federal law and, Chomiak said, it's up to Ottawa to change legislation to ensure public security takes precedence in any board decisions over the planned rehabilitation of an offender.

"The law is dictated by federal legislation. We have asked the government of Canada in writing, twice, to change it," he said.

Even if the provincial government stepped in to demand an appeal, it would be an uphill battle. Because the Crown did not oppose any of the changes to Li's conditions, it would essentially be appealing its own position.

Lead psychiatrist Dr. Steven Kremer said Li, a schizophrenic, has stopped experiencing delusions and is a model, non-violent patient.

Kremer also said Li always takes his medication and understands the importance of doing so.

Eventually, Kremer told the hearing, the aim is to reintegrate Li into society.

Feb 28 2014

OTTAWA - The Harper government, which has championed the rights of gun owners for years, is reviewing a decision by the RCMP to effectively ban a previously legal rifle.

The Mounties recently reclassified the Swiss Arms Classic Green carbine as a prohibited weapon, essentially banning it.

"I am upset by this unacceptable decision regarding Swiss Arms rifles," Steven Blaney, minister of Public Safety, said in a statement Friday.

"This decision was made by bureaucrats,



not elected officials. I have therefore ordered an urgent review of this unfortunate situation."

"All options are on the table to ensure that no firearms owner who acted in good faith suffers any consequence as a result of this situation."

BLUE LINE expo 2014

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INTERVIEWING & DECEPTION

Day 1: April 29th, 9am-4pm
The Non Accusatory Interview
Presenters: S/Sgt Gordon MacKinnon (ret'd) and A/Sgt Wayne Vanderlaan (ret'd)
Fee: \$100

Day 2: April 30th, 9am-4pm
Dealing with Deception
Presenters: A/Sgt Wayne Vanderlaan (ret'd) and S/Sgt Gordon MacKinnon (ret'd)
Fee: \$100

DAY 1: April 29th - Counter Terrorism

9am - 12pm: *Suicide Bomber - The Modern Urban Terror Threat: Understanding and Identifying the Suicide Bomber*
Presenter: Nir Maman

1-4pm: *Iran, Hizbollah, Drug Cartels: Counter-terrorism Considerations*
Presenter: Clare Lopez, CIA (ret'd)

DAY 2: April 30th, 9am - 4pm

Law Enforcement First Response - Tactical Casualty Care (LEFR-TCC)
Presenter: David Steignaga, Yan Regis, Shawn Denty

DAY 2: April 30th

Mentally Ill and Law Enforcement

9am - 12pm: *Suicide by Cop*
Presenter: Jean Guy Gagnon, Forensic Psychiatrist

1pm-4pm: *The Mentally Ill in a Corrections Setting*
Presenter: Dr Yuki Kanomi, Clinical Psychologist

Fee: \$250 - one day; \$400 - two days
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Alberta Tory MP Chris Warkentin raised the issue in question period Friday, saying the rifles had been legally sold for a decade.

He says there have never been any criminal events reported involving the weapon, but it has been banned at the stroke of a pen.

The RCMP has not given an explanation of its decision.

Feb 28 2014

CALGARY - Federal Justice Minister Peter MacKay says he's worried about public confidence in Canada's justice system.



In a speech to law students at the University of Calgary on Friday, MacKay highlighted several of the law-and-order plans being championed by the Harper government, including efforts to battle online bullying as well as tougher sentencing initiatives.

But he expressed concern about how the average Canadian views the legal system.

"We must ask ourselves some fundamental questions about our profession. Do Canadians have faith in the justice system, and what changes must we make to increase public faith and confidence in our system?" MacKay asked.

"The system too often loses track of its central mandate and that is to enable Canadians, to assist them in the betterment of their life, their cause, their business. The very people that the Canadian system is supposed to serve when they seek justice."

MacKay said the legal profession needs to ensure that those Canadians navigating the legal system have access to lawyers. He said the system can be incredibly complex and overwhelming for those in it who lack legal training.

"We are seeing a sharp rise in unrepresented accused in courtrooms and in conflict with the law," said MacKay.

The justice minister said the lack of legal representation is a more serious problem in rural areas and on reserves.

"We have a rising aboriginal population in Canada. They are perhaps among the most excluded when it comes to our justice system and the recognition is not enough. We have to do more to address these very real challenges on the reserve," MacKay said.

He pointed to the death of 26-year-old Loretta Saunders, a St. Mary's University student whose body was found off the Trans-Canada Highway west of Salisbury, N.B. Police are treating her death as a homicide.

"She was doing her thesis on murdered and missing aboriginal women ... the fate that befell her. There is no more stark call for action than to think that a young aboriginal woman in this country, who was so dedicated to that cause, has become the face of violence and the exclusion that many aboriginal people still feel in this country," MacKay said.

He said there's a lesson there for all future lawyers.

"Each of us has a responsibility to contribute to our shared vision of equal access to justice in Canada from sea to sea."

Feb 28 2014

EDMONTON - A man who killed an Edmonton police dog has been sentenced to 26 months in prison.

Paul Joseph Vukmanich has also been banned from owning a pet for 25 years.

Judge Larry Anderson told Vukmanich on Friday that he didn't just attack a dog. "It's an attack on your society and it's an attack on what's meaningful in society."

Court heard that Vukmanich was high on drugs and fleeing from police last fall when he repeatedly stabbed the dog named Quanto.

Officers had set the German shepherd loose after Vukmanich was caught driving a car with stolen plates and ran away on foot.

Vukmanich, 27, pleaded guilty earlier this week to animal cruelty and other offences, including evading police.

Crown and defence lawyers recommended a plea deal for the 26 months. While the judge said he wanted to impose more time, he decided the recommendation wasn't so out of line that he could overrule it.

He specifically said 18 months of the sentence was for the dog's death.

Crown prosecutor Christian Lim told reporters he believes that sets a precedent for animal cruelty.

The Crown had also requested Vukmanich be ordered to pay \$40,000 to police to cover the cost of a new dog and its training. But the judge said the restitution matter should be handled by a civil court.

Anderson noted that the case "struck a public nerve." Police were swamped with emails and messages of sympathy after the dog died. At the time, police also complained that the toughest charge available was animal cruelty.

The federal government signalled in the speech from the throne in October that it would create new legislation to protect animals that work with police and call it Quanto's Law. The government did not specify what the law might entail.

The officer told court in his victim impact statement that although Quanto lived with his family, the dog's primary role was as his protector, a role the animal fearlessly fulfilled.

However, Williamson said, Quanto's death has had a profound effect on the officer's

six-year-old daughter, who came to him crying one day with a question: "If Quanto's job was to protect you from bad guys ... is a bad guy going to kill you?"

Williamson said the little girl never lets him leave for work now without hugging him first.

Williamson is to start training a new dog and will rejoin the canine unit in the spring.



Mar 01 2014

ST. JOHN'S - The new chief of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary says organized crime in the province has become more violent over the last decade.



Former deputy chief Bill Janes, announced Friday morning at Confederation Building as the RNC's 21st chief, says organized crime has changed in recent years.

"There's more cocaine than there was 10 years ago, and there's a shift in terms of a willingness to use violence," said Janes, who noted that the presence of organized crime means the RNC will need to work closely with the RCMP and community partners.

"They don't follow police borders and provincial borders and international borders. They cross all those borders, so we have to work in partnership with other organizations."

Janes said it's too early to say what his priorities will be as he takes over the top job.

"I think it would be premature to say what the priorities are," he said. "We're doing jurisdictional and environmental scans, we've had consultations with our managers and we'll do that with all of our staff. So you need to draw all that information together to determine exactly what your priorities are."

Janes added, though, that an RNC pilot project to focus on domestic violence will continue, and that the force has had success with intelligence-led policing.

Janes joined the RNC in 1985 and spent time on patrol, in operational support and in the criminal investigation division.

He has received the Police Exemplary Service Medal and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

He trained at the Canadian Police College, Ontario Police College, the Canadian Emergency Preparedness College and Memorial University's Gardiner Centre, and holds a

bachelor's degree in arts with a major in police studies from Memorial University.

Premier Tom Marshall, announcing Janes' appointment, also thanked outgoing chief Robert Johnston.

"He can enjoy his retirement, secure with the knowledge that under his leadership the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary has become a better, more modern police force, with a reputation that ranks among the finest in the world," said Marshall.

Johnston said the RNC will be in good hands with Janes, and thanked "all the people in the community that support the RNC."

The RNC needs to maintain public confidence to provide effective service, Johnston said.

"We need to have those relationships," he said. "They're critical to our success. For me, as chief of police ... the success I've had as chief is because I had two extraordinary deputy chiefs working with me, and I had a phenomenal management team support our role as a management team, as an executive, but I think the final word should go to the women and men and the civilian employees of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary — they're the people that do the work each day."

Mar 01 2014

ROTHESAY, N.B. - RCMP are investigating after a man died in a shooting involving an officer with the Rothesay Regional Police.

Rothesay police say it happened Friday evening at a residence on the Shipyard Road in Rothesay, N.B.

Police say the incident involved a violent domestic dispute.

A 27 year-old man was rushed to the Saint John Regional Hospital where he died.

Rothesay police say they called in the RCMP "J" Division major crime unit to investigate.

No other details have been released.

Mar 01 2014

CALGARY - Calgary's police chief says a vehicle was ramming police cruisers during an officer-involved shooting that left a man dead and a woman seriously-injured.

Rick Hanson says officers were investigating reports of gunshots and a stolen vehicle on Friday night.

A car was spotted driving on sidewalks and pathways, going through red lights and was involved in two hit-and-runs.

Hanson says police decided to stop it in the interest of public safety, and he says they boxed it in using their cruisers.

He says an officer immediately jumped out to challenge the driver, but instead of surrendering, the driver accelerated towards the officer and began ramming police vehicles.

Police say a service firearm was discharged as officers approached the vehicle.

The Alberta Serious Incident Response

Team has taken over the investigation.

No officers were hurt.

(CFFR)

**SUNDAY
MARCH 02, 2014**

Mar 02 2014

EDMONTON - Police in Edmonton have laid murder charges against a man arrested after a stabbing rampage at a grocery warehouse.

Jayme Pasiaka, 29, from Edmonton, faces two counts of first degree murder, two counts of attempted murder, aggravated assault and two counts of possession of an offensive weapon.

Pasiaka was arrested Friday after a man with a knife in each hand and wearing a military-style vest burst into the Loblaws warehouse during shift-change and started stabbing people throughout the complex.

Fitzroy Harris, 50, and Thierno Bah, 41, both died. Four others were injured.

Police say they searched the suspect's house on Saturday, but aren't releasing details of what they found.

Mar 02 2014

EDMONTON - Dozens of teachers, shielded behind a clear plastic door, heard the rapid fire of ammunition, smelled gunpowder and watched police demonstrate their response to a school shooting, said the sergeant who helped plan the training exercise for educators this week.

Officers with the Edmonton police school resource officer unit ran the exercise twice Thursday and once Friday. It was one of dozens of sessions teachers could sign up for at this year's Greater Edmonton Teachers Convention.

"It was as dynamic as we could get without putting anybody in harm's way," said Sgt. Kelly Rosnau, one of two officers in charge of the unit, which has 18 officers in 19 schools.

"When they're done, they walk through and there's empty rounds on the ground, so it becomes very real."

It's the first time police have run such training at the teachers convention, Rosnau said. The session was closed to the media to avoid publicizing police tactics.

Officers hope the training reinforces for the 130 teachers and administrators who participated just how important school lockdown drills really are, Rosnau said.

Two teachers per scenario played the role of teachers leading kids through a lockdown, and police took on the roles of students, responding officers and the armed attacker firing blanks, Rosnau said.

"Most of these incidents don't last very long, a couple minutes at most, so response is

huge," he said.

"With the co-operation of the educators doing a proper lockdown, we're going to minimize the casualties."

Edmonton's public and Catholic school districts recently asked principals across the city to review school security measures after an incident in late January, when a man entered a north Edmonton elementary school and allegedly touched a boy in a bathroom.

At Catholic schools in Edmonton, principals were told to discuss school security with staff and teachers, and to make sure doors are locked, security cameras are working, and visitors to the school wear name tags, Catholic school district spokeswoman Lori Nagy said.

(Edmonton Journal)

Mar 02 2014

OTTAWA, Ont. - Violent crimes in Canada come with a huge financial cost, to victims and to the justice system, says a new Justice Canada report.

Five types of violent crimes that occurred in 2009 had an economic impact of \$12.7 billion, says the detailed accounting of dozens of factors, from medical care and lost wages to court and social welfare costs.

The study is the department's fourth since 2011 to examine the grim price tags associated with crime in Canada, all of them focused on the burden placed on victims.

The latest research, completed in December, looked at every case of assault, criminal harassment, homicide, robbery, and sexual assault and other sexual offences, that occurred in 2009.

Excluded were cases in which there was a spousal relationship, which was the special subject of a previous study. The project drew on police and court databanks as well as surveys from Statistics Canada.

By far the largest single cost - \$4.8 billion of the total - was attributed to sexual assault and other sexual offences, crimes in which more than 90 per cent of victims were women.

Victims bore most of the costs for all five types of crime, \$10.6 billion, with criminal justice system and third-party costs far behind.

"The victims bear the greatest burden of the impacts, much of it intangible, and family, friends and employers can also be burdened," the authors conclude.

"The impacts are eventually felt by all Canadians in the form of public spending on the justice system and social services."

The Canadian Press obtained a copy of the 168-page report through the Access to Information Act.

The research emerges from the Conservative government's strong focus on victims as it continues to implement changes to the justice system, including mandatory minimum sentences and tougher rules on pardons.

Previous Justice Canada studies, using the same methodology, examined the economic

cost of all crimes that occurred in 2008 (\$99.6 billion); of gun crimes in the same year (\$3.1 billion); and of spousal violence that occurred in 2009 (\$7.4 billion).

This area of research, pioneered in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, is touted as helping to show the potential economic effects of reducing crime, and to provide governments information to assign resources more effectively.

“Understanding and being aware of the costs of crime, particularly as they impact victims, can result in more effective and timely crime interventions,” said department spokesman Andrew Gowing.

“The work helps program and policy makers understand where the greatest economic impact of crime falls for governments, businesses and those who have experienced violence.”

“The knowledge helps to better allocate resources for victims of crime.”

Gowing added that the research helps fulfil Canada’s commitments under the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Justice Minister Peter MacKay has promised a victims bill of rights this year, after consultations throughout 2013, and the department says it has provided more than \$120 million since 2006 for victim-oriented initiatives, some delivered by the provinces.

MONDAY
MARCH 03, 2014

Mar 03 2014

TORONTO - Security costs for the 2015 Pan American Games in the Toronto area are on the rise.

The Ministry of Community Safety says a contract is now “almost in place” for private security services at next year’s Pan Am/Parapan Am Games across southern Ontario.

The Ministry says the estimated total costs for securing the Games will increase to approximately \$239 million from the previous estimate of \$206 million.

However, it cautions that security planning is ongoing and must respond to any specific threats that may be identified in the future.

The security bill is just a fraction of the nearly \$900 million spent on security at the Vancouver Olympics, but officials say there is a lower risk profile at the Pan Am Games.

Ontario’s Liberal government is already under fire for not including the cost of building the athletes’ village in its original \$1.4-billion budget for the games.

The total price, including security, transportation and the athletes’ village, will drive the cost of Toronto’s Pan Am Games to an estimated \$2.5 billion.

Mar 03 2014

VANCOUVER - B.C.’s appeal court has dismissed a legal challenge against the province’s strict drunk-driving laws.

They allow police to impose immediate roadside penalties, including fines and fees, driving bans and seizure of a vehicle.

The court released the judgment after several people who received roadside prohibitions argued the law is unconstitutional.

The BC Civil Liberties Association told the appeal court earlier that the laws violate the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Attorney General Suzanne Anton has said the three-year-old law has saved almost 200 lives.

The provincial government was forced to amend the laws two years ago when a B.C. Supreme Court judge struck down parts of the legislation as unconstitutional.

Mar 03 2014

ORILLIA, Ont. - Ontario Provincial Police say distracted driving is becoming the No. 1 killer on the roads.

Kicking off a new campaign this month, OPP say distracted driving accounted for more deaths last year than impaired or speed-related incidents in crashes they investigated.

Their statistics say 78 people died in distracted driving-related collisions in 2013, compared to 57 impaired driving deaths and 44 speed-related deaths.

The distracted driving campaign starts this weekend and runs until March 14, and police say officers will be raising awareness and focusing enforcement on the problem.

Meanwhile, the current distracted driving fine of \$155 jumps to \$280 starting March 18.

The new amount is comprised of an increased base fine of \$225, plus a \$50 victim fine surcharge and \$5 for court costs.

Mar 03 2014

OTTAWA - The federal government says the unforeseen growth of its medical marijuana program has “seriously compromised” the goal of providing the drug to patients while ensuring public safety.

The number of people authorized to possess marijuana under the federal program has risen to 37,000 this year from fewer than 100 in 2001.

In a court document defending planned changes to the program, the government says growing marijuana at home poses hazards including mould, fire, toxic chemicals and the threat of home invasion by criminals.

It says the number of licensed users could climb as high as 400,000, adding it is not possible for Health Canada to effectively inspect tens of thousands of production sites across the country.

Under the existing program, to be eliminated April 1, people are issued licences to

grow marijuana for their personal use to help ease painful symptoms.

Several British Columbia residents are asking the Federal Court of Canada for an injunction that would allow them to continue producing their own pot.

Mar 03 2014

VANCOUVER - B.C.’s police watchdog has ordered a public hearing over allegations a Vancouver police officer rammed a speeding vehicle and later lied about what happened.

The Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner says the allegations stem from an early morning incident on Dec. 26, 2011, when an SUV was reported to be travelling at high speed in Vancouver’s east side.

The notice says a supervisor ordered officers not to pursue the SUV, and minutes later Const. Christopher Charters reported that his cruiser had been rammed by the suspect vehicle.

A notice from the commissioner says a subsequent investigation determined Charters’ cruiser hit the suspect vehicle, rather than the other way around.

An internal review by the Vancouver Police Department concluded Charters should be dismissed from the force for deceit, but the officer has requested the complaints commissioner hold a public hearing.

A retired judge will hear evidence about the allegations and determine what discipline, if any, Charters will face.

Mar 03 2014

WINNIPEG - The organizer of a popular Winnipeg motorcycle show has been cleared of allegations he obstructed and assaulted police who turned up at his event to seize a racing bike linked to a high-ranking Manitoba Hells Angel.

Robert (Robyn) Gray was acquitted in provincial court Monday.

Gray represented himself at trial and successfully challenged several facets of the Crown’s case.

Judge Wanda Garreck found police breached Gray’s rights against unlawful search and seizure and arbitrary detention.

As well, she ruled, Const. Jeff Norman breached his duty to properly investigate who should have been served with a search warrant police obtained to seize a Harley-Davidson Destroyer from a display at the Rolling Thunder motorcycle show at Winnipeg’s Convention Centre on March 16, 2012.

Police and the Crown alleged the motorbike belonged to a Hells Angels member who had been arrested that day in a major drug crackdown against the gang.

(Winnipeg Free Press)

The B.C. government will appoint outside police forces to audit missing women files, unsolved homicides and other serious police investigations that turn into cold cases, under new legislation introduced Monday.



Justice Minister Suzanne Anton said her government's director of police services, Clayton Pecknold, will be given new powers to assign external police investigators to review cases that are stalled or left to go cold within other police departments.

The change was one of the recommendations made by Missing Women Commissioner Wally Oppal in a 2012 report.

"There were many different problems identified by commissioner Oppal but one of them was missing person's files had been allowed to languish," said Anton.

"My head of police services here can (now) order an audit of files that have gone to sleep."

The decision on which cases to audit will be largely driven by public complaints, she added.

"Certainly in the case of the missing women ... there was evidence that families along the way would say, 'Look you haven't done anything,'" recalled Anton.

Oppal said Monday that while there is still more work to be done to address all 65 recommendations, he was happy to see the government follow through on his suggestion to increase the power of the director of police services.

The justice ministry said it also planned to create new standards for missing person and other major investigations, as well as to promote "bias-free policing."

Oppal said such charges are crucial, as his report concluded police agencies had discriminated against Pickton's victims.

"That was my finding that the police were biased. Had any of those women come from Kerrisdale or the university district, you can imagine that the reaction of the police would be quite different," Oppal said.

Neither the RCMP nor Vancouver police would comment on the proposed legislation, referring all questions to the Justice Ministry.

(Vancouver Sun)

The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police have launched its 2014 crime prevention campaign, which focuses on promoting citizens' role in preventing crime and building safe and healthy communities.

"We believe that strong, safe, and healthy communities are built when citizens partner with their police service in preventing criminal acts before they happen," said Niagara Regional Police Const. Derek Watson. "Our goal is to raise public awareness and empower people throughout our communities to become involved in their personal safety and that of their neighbours, friends, and co-workers."

The "Your Community. Your Safety. Get Involved" campaign features a crime prevention booklet that will be used by police services across the province to promote local crime prevention.

Topics covered in the booklet, include getting involved in local crime prevention initiatives and programs, when to call 9-1-1, securing your home or business from break-ins and other property crimes, vigilance against on-line fraud, identification theft and other cybercrimes, and guarding against vehicle theft.

To download the booklet, visit www.oacp.ca

(Fort Erie Times)

HALIFAX - Police in Halifax are shopping for a new piece of software designed to search social media for clues that could help in investigations.

The force issued a tender last week for new software to skim Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Lauri Stevens, a Boston-based social media strategist who works with law enforcement agencies, said in the last two years, more tools have become available for police.

"It's remarkable, actually, how much people put out there about what their activities are," she said.

Different software packages can search, monitor and capture information in a format public prosecutors can use.

"Packaging it for court cases is what the commercial tools don't really do, and so these law enforcement tools take great care to make sure that they can prove the way the data was captured is indeed how it existed on the web," said Stevens.

When it comes to privacy concerns, Stevens points out that police "can't get at any information that isn't out there in the open."

Police in other Canadian cities are already sharpening their social media investigation skills.

Vancouver police investigators said they monitored thousands of photos and videos online after the 2011 Stanley Cup riot.

The Toronto Police Service has already implemented social media monitoring software.

"Social media is a great way to reach the public for both community engagement and then the public expects that you're going to be able to be in a position to actually capture digital evidence if there's evidence out there of a crime," said Toronto Const. Scott Mills, the force's social media officer.

"They also expect you to be able to prevent a crime using social media."

According to the request for proposal, police in Halifax are interested in the software for a range of investigations, including cases that involve bullying, protests and hostage situations.

(CBC News)

TUESDAY
MARCH 04, 2014

BELLEVILLE, Ont. - A First Nations protest continued Tuesday on a rural road east of Belleville, Ont., with a section of the route shut down for a second straight day.

The demonstrators moved onto Shannonville Road on Sunday night, and Napanee OPP closed the road on Monday for safety reasons.

The protesters are supporting a plea by Mohawk activist Shawn Brant for a federal inquiry to be called into the large number of murdered and missing aboriginal women.

A small group of protesters remained at the scene overnight, and police continue to monitor the situation.

(CJOJ)

VANCOUVER - Vancouver Police Chief Jim Chu has had his contract extended until 2017.

On Tuesday the Vancouver Police Board announced the chief, who has led the department through some tough times, including the Stanley Cup Riot, will have two years added to his current contract, which was set to expire in 2015. He was first given a five-year contract in 2007, but in 2010 it was renewed until 2015.

Mayor Gregor Robertson, the board chair, said he appreciated the police chief's attention making Vancouver a safer city.

"Chief Jim Chu's leadership has contributed immensely to Vancouver's progress toward the goal of becoming the safest major city in North America, including a record low homicide rate," he said in an emailed statement.

In 2013 Chu's salary was reported to be more than \$314,000.

Chu enjoys a good relationship with

Robertson. Only a few times since Robertson was elected in 2008 have the mayor and chief differed publicly on opinions. One was over Robertson's view that there should be a moratorium on the use of Tasers. Another was over Chu's belief that the federal government should appoint a Downtown Eastside czar to deal with the considerable social problems that afflict many of the area's residents.

However, the two men share some common views, including the need for a regional police force. Chu's department has also strongly endorsed the city's "four pillars" harm reduction strategy for drugs in the Downtown Eastside. Although a creation of a former city administration, the policy forms a strong backbone of Robertson's own agenda for reducing homelessness and mental health problems in the neighbourhood.

(Vancouver Sun)

Mar 04 2014

HALIFAX – Police officers handed out reflective armbands to pedestrians in the Halifax area Tuesday in a bid to reduce the number of crosswalk accidents in the city.

"We're handing these out in hopes that folks will accept them willingly and wear them willingly at night or even during the day," said Sgt. David Reynolds of the Halifax Regional Police traffic unit.

RCMP and Halifax Regional Police officers were at marked crosswalks in busy locations, including Spring Garden Road, handing out about 3,000 armbands. The yellow reflective velcro bands bear the phrase "I see you. Do you see me?"

It's the first time police have handed out reflective gear to the public, and it was a direct response to a rash of recent collisions.

"We're trying everything we can to reduce incidents like the ones we've had over the past few months. We'll try programs like this, we'll try education, we'll do the enforcement piece, we'll do whatever it takes," said Reynolds.

There have been at least 54 pedestrian-vehicle incidents in the city since Jan. 1.

In February, Halifax Regional Council voted to put in zebra markings at all uncontrolled, marked crosswalks in the municipality.

(Shaw Media)



Mar 05 2014

TORONTO - Ontario's provincial police is now overseeing an investigation into the activities of Mayor Rob Ford, who has repeatedly attacked the legitimacy of the probe, Toronto's police Chief Bill Blair said Wednesday.

Ford's lawyer immediately denounced

the oversight change, which leaves senior city investigators on the case, as "meaningless."

In a letter to OPP Commissioner Chris Lewis, Blair laid out his reasons for asking his provincial colleagues for help.

"I am taking this step to avoid the distractions that have assumed such recent prominence," Blair said in the letter.

"The only public interest here is the continued investigation, without fear or favour, into evidence of possible criminality."

Ford did not immediately comment.

However, his lawyer dismissed the change, saying provincial police should have run the investigation from the get-go to avoid any conflict of interest.

"Only after (Blair) has been battered, beaten and bruised for close to a year has he finally done the right thing," Dennis Morris told The Canadian Press.

"It's meaningless now because I'd guess 99 per cent of the investigation has been completed."

If there were any charges planned against the mayor, Morris said, police should have laid them already.

Ford, who has vociferously challenged the chief to arrest him, has branded the investigation political. He has publicly accused Blair of wasting tax money - with little result.

Last week the mayor pressed a similar theme.

"Why won't (Blair) come clean and tell the taxpayers how much money has he spent on surveilling me and obviously coming up with nothing - coming up with me urinating in a parking lot? Coming up with an empty vodka bottle?"

The Toronto police investigation in question - dubbed "Project Brazen 2" - arose last spring out of a year-long guns, gangs and drugs probe.

It was during the initial probe that police uncovered a video showing Ford apparently smoking crack cocaine, and decided to investigate his activities.

Ford's friend Alexander (Sandro) Lisi was charged in the first investigation with drug offences, and later with extortion in relation to the "crack" video. The allegations have not been proven in court.

"We're always very concerned that nothing is said or done that could have any impact on current or future court proceedings," said Toronto police spokesman Mark Pugash.

"We'll always err on the side of caution."

Veteran Toronto homicide investigator, Det.-Sgt. Gary Giroux, will continue to lead the investigation, but will now answer to a senior provincial police officer rather than to senior city police officers.

The provincial inspector will have no direct involvement in the probe, but will be available for consultation or to offer advice, police said.

The OPP commissioner said the change

is "semantics" but said the investigative team will no longer report up a chain in Toronto police, ultimately to Blair.

"That removes the whole senior management team of the Toronto police and the chief from any involvement - or perception of involvement - in any decision-making around this case," Lewis said.

Lewis said Blair wanted the public to be confident that there was no interference from the chief or other senior city officers.

He also said there was no indication any charges were imminent.

Mar 05 2014

VERNON, B.C. - A former RCMP officer in Vernon, B.C., will face child pornography charges.

A provincial court judge in the north Okanagan city has found there is enough evidence to proceed with charges against 35-year-old Ryan Hampton.

He appeared in court Tuesday charged with nine counts including possession of child pornography and obstruction of justice, and will return April 14 to set a date for trial.

Hampton was suspended without pay almost immediately after his arrest last June.

At the time, Chief Supt. Mike Sekela said the force would also hold a formal disciplinary hearing and seek Hampton's dismissal.

Hampton has since resigned and is no longer a member of the RCMP.

(CKIZ)

Mar 05 2014

AURORA, Ont. - A York Regional Police officer is facing charges following an internal investigation into alleged misuse of insurance benefits.

Police say two separate investigations began in June 2013 after the force received complaints from its benefits provider.

Investigators say Const. Eric MacDonald, 40, of Barrie, Ont., is charged with two counts each of uttering false document and fraud under \$5,000, and one count of fraud over \$5,000.

MacDonald - who has been a member of the York Regional Police since 1999 - was suspended with pay in August 2013, pending the outcome of the investigation.

His next court date is March 27 in Newmarket, Ont.

Police say a second investigation involving another officer is still ongoing.

"It is extremely disappointing ... when an officer within our organization has been charged," York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe said Wednesday in a statement.

Mar 05 2014

TORONTO - Toronto police chief Bill Blair's move to put the OPP in charge of a lengthy criminal investigation of Toronto's mayor is too little, too late,

says Rob Ford.

The damage has already been done, says Ford, who has repeatedly attacked the legitimacy of the investigation and continues to accuse Blair of “playing political games.”

Blair says he asked the provincial police to lead the probe in an effort to avoid recent distractions.

Ford has publicly accused Blair of wasting tax money with the investigation, and vociferously challenged the chief to arrest and charge him.

Mar 05 2014

VANCOUVER - Canada's first court to link repeat offenders to social programs such health and housing has met its goal of cutting crime, says an evaluation into the pilot project in Vancouver.

The document released by the Justice Ministry on Wednesday says the Downtown Community Court, which was established in 2008, has led to a greater drop in recidivism compared to a traditional court that does not connect offenders to services in the community.

The study compared 250 people sentenced in community court to 250 others sentenced in the neighbouring provincial court between April 2008 and March 2011.

It analyzed the number of offences committed by the two groups before the four-year period to the number committed afterwards.

The community court in the city's impoverished Downtown Eastside saw an average drop of 2.3 offences per person, compared to 1.35 offences per person in the provincial court, the report said.

The main idea behind establishing the community court in Vancouver was to help offenders break from the cycle of crime, homelessness, and mental health and addictions issues prevalent in the Downtown Eastside.

Former B.C. Attorney General Wally Oppal, who was in office when the community court opened, said he was encouraged to see its progress.

“When you look at chronic offenders, 50 per cent at least are suffering from some kind of mental illness,” he said Wednesday.

“Others are either homeless or addicted to drugs and alcohol, so the idea was to try and rehabilitate people so they don't become chronic offenders or repeat offenders.”

The court was also created to help the justice system run more efficiently by taking on cases that normally would be handled by the nearby provincial court.

The evaluation report said that court seemed to be more efficient after the community court was established. But it noted that the increased efficiency could be part of a long-term trend rather than the community court's help with the case load.

The community court is handling a heavier case load than was originally expected, so changes may be needed to ensure cases are

being processed in a timely fashion, the report said.

Case management teams assigned to offenders in community court help them access rehabilitation services or treatment programs and reduce the risk of re-offending.

The court also holds events such as public forums, open houses and barbecues to engage with the community it serves.

The report said a survey of community members show some believe offenders are benefiting from the initiative, while others think access to services such as drug treatment and permanent housing need to be improved.

The B.C. government said in a release that it expects to use the evaluation of the Downtown Community Court to help develop a broader strategy for specialized courts in the province.

Mar 05 2014

OTTAWA - The Conservative government is seriously considering more lenient marijuana laws that would allow police to ticket anyone caught with small amounts of pot instead of laying charges, Justice Minister Peter MacKay said Wednesday.

“We're not talking about decriminalization or legalization,” MacKay said following the weekly Conservative caucus meeting on Parliament Hill.

“The Criminal Code would still be available to police, but we would look at options that would give police the ability, much like the treatment of open liquor ... to ticket those types of offences,” he said.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper is open to such an approach, he added. The Justice Department is examining it and could present draft legislation.

MacKay has hinted in the past that such a move was under consideration. The country's police chiefs -as well as some Tory caucus members - have long called for ticketing people for pot possession instead of laying criminal charges.

**THURSDAY
MARCH 06, 2014**

Mar 06 2014

VANCOUVER - The Canada Border Services Agency is responding to allegations that little has been done to implement recommendations from a public inquiry seven years ago.

The Arar inquiry examined what happened when an Ottawa telecommunications engineer was tortured in Syria over false terrorism suspicions, and it recommended an outside body review the national security duties of the CBSA.

The BC Civil Liberties Association says the federal government has yet to implement

those recommendations, and spokesman Josh Paterson says he wants to see an independent body monitor all areas in which the agency acts like a police force.

But the agency says in a written statement that it has strengthened its own internal review processes, an internal department investigates allegations of wrongdoing, and members of the public can file complaints.

The CBSA did not respond to a question about whether it needs to be placed under the watch of an independent body.

Mar 06 2014

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. - The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary says thefts from vehicles have become an epidemic in the province.

That's why the police force has launched a campaign called “Lock it or Lose it.”

Police Sgt. Doug Day says a one-day inspection of 714 vehicles found that 45 per cent of them were susceptible to crime.

Day says many were unlocked and others had valuable items in plain view.

He says that in November and December, a record 320 incidents were reported to police.

However, he says the number of actual thefts would have been far higher, given that many of these crimes are not reported.

(VOCM)

Mar 06 2014

VANCOUVER - Vancouver police have sent a message to the federal government about its new medicinal marijuana laws - they don't consider enforcement a priority now, and they won't when the new rules come into effect next month.

The department has taken a mostly hands-off approach to the many medical pot shops in the West Coast city.

Instead, police say violent drug traffickers and gang members who pose a danger to the community are their priority - criteria the medical marijuana dispensaries don't fit.

Police Chief Jim Chu says Vancouver is not a wide open city for the marijuana trade but police suggested they do not take action unless there is a threat to public safety.

Police say the dispensaries are illegal under the current laws and they'll be illegal under the revised laws as of April 1.

Under the old rules, a person with a marijuana prescription could grow their own pot, designate another grower or buy it from Health Canada, but as of April 1, they will have to buy from an approved grower.

Mar 06 2014

HALIFAX - Nova Scotia's three main party leaders are calling on the federal government to launch a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

In a joint statement, Liberal Premier Stephen McNeil says the death of Loretta Saunders is a tragic reminder of a serious issue.

Saunders, a 26-year-old Inuit woman from Labrador, was studying at Saint Mary's

University in Halifax when she disappeared last month.

Her remains were found by the side of a New Brunswick highway two weeks later and two people face first-degree murder charges in her death.

A special parliamentary committee has been studying the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women, but Nova Scotia Tory Opposition Leader Jamie Baillie says the time has come for a full-fledged national inquiry.

NDP Leader Maureen MacDonald says Saunders's death highlights what she calls a troubling pattern of violence that needs to be addressed by all levels of government.

Mar 06 2014

WEST VANCOUVER - A second top cop has stepped down from West Vancouver's police department following complaints of bullying and harassment in the municipal force.

Insp. Mike Rattray's retirement was announced in an internal department email Tuesday afternoon, sources told The Province. The sources added they believe a third retirement is expected at the force in the coming days.

Chief Const. Peter Lepine announced his retirement several weeks ago, on the day that The Province reported on a management crisis within the force.

In The Province's exclusive Feb. 17 story, West Vancouver Mayor and police board chair Mike Smith promised he would make significant changes to the force, and that he would not tolerate bullying and harassment of employees in West Vancouver.

Lepine has said that his retirement is not connected to the current management crisis. On Wednesday, a spokesman for Mayor Smith confirmed Rattray's retirement. But the mayor at this time won't comment on Rattray's retirement or further potential personnel moves, his office said.

The Province requested interviews with Lepine and Rattray on Wednesday, but the request was declined.

WVPD Const. Jeff Palmer read a statement from the brass: "Employees of the West Vancouver police make their own career decisions on an ongoing basis. Chief Lepine considers it inappropriate to comment publicly on any individual's personal career decisions."

According to Rattray's biography, his career started with the RCMP in 1978.

(The Province)

Mar 06 2014

EDMONTON - Canadian police have launched an investigation after online bitcoin bank Flexcoin, which closed its virtual doors this week, said that it had lost about \$600,000 worth of the digital currency in a hacker attack.

The Edmonton-based company reported the theft of 896 bitcoins on its website on Monday and said it "does not have the resources (or) assets ... to come back from this loss." It blamed the attack on hackers who

had targeted its online wallet.

Bitcoins stored in Flexcoin's cold storage facility, which is basically an offline bank, were not affected by the hack and will be returned to customers, the company said.

The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) said on Wednesday they were investigating the issue.

"I can confirm that detectives from the EPS Economic Crimes Section and Technological Crimes Unit are following up with Flexcoin, and the matter is currently under investigation," said police spokesman Chad Orydzuk.

Flexcoin's demise comes close on the heels of the collapse of Mt. Gox, once the world's dominant bitcoin exchange, which filed for bankruptcy last week after it said it had lost some 850,000 bitcoins.

Bitcoin is a digital currency that is bought and sold on a peer-to-peer network, independent of any central bank or government. Its value soared last year, and the total worth of bitcoins minted is now about \$7 billion.

Flexcoin had earlier on Wednesday complained that local authorities were not taking the theft seriously, Tweeting: "My attempts to file a police report were laughed at, I was advised #bitcoin is a scam." But it later Tweeted that it had been in touch with police and would provide more information on Thursday.

While bitcoins are an unregulated currency, a hacker that breaks into a computer to steal bitcoins can be charged with unauthorized access to a computer and mischief to data.

(Reuters)

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