

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK *Celebrating 20 Years*

A Chronicle of News for the Law Enforcement Community | March 13, 2015 – Vol. 20 No. 11

Executive Digest

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BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

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Abbotsford police officer recipient of Blue Line Leadership Award

March 13, 2014

Markham, ON - The public information officer for the Abbotsford, British Columbia, Police Department, is the 2015 recipient of the Police Leadership Award, sponsored by Blue Line Magazine.

Constable Ian MacDonald has served as a dedicated police communications specialist for the past five years, but he has quickly earned a reputation as one of the most capable police spokespersons in British Columbia's policing community. The Blue Line Leadership Award acknowledges that Ian's work is now attracting attention across Canada.

The award recognizes and encourages a standard of excellence that exemplifies "Leadership as an Activity, not a Position," and pride in service to the public. Its goal is to increase the effectiveness, influence and quality of Canadian police situational leadership from both an organizational and community perspective.

Ian MacDonald possesses all of these qualities. While much of his work is highly visible as the "voice and face" of the Abbotsford Police Department, he is known by his peers as someone who works quietly, modestly and strategically, behind the scenes. Ian tirelessly develops and delivers a wide variety of informative promotional programs that engage citizens and foster cooperative solutions to problems concerning crime and public safety.

Among the many projects and initiatives he has championed, Constable MacDonald's public education programs directed toward gang prevention and personal safety on the roads and in schools have been recognized



by the solicitor general of British Columbia.

Constable MacDonald is a trusted source of information within the communities he serves and within the ranks of police departments in British Columbia. He has worked with his fellow officers to promote positive relationships with the news media and, more recently, introduced them to the benefits of positive communication through social media. His contributions to the Abbotsford Police Department have helped that organization maintain its rightful place as a modern community-based public service.

Constable MacDonald will receive the Blue Line Police Leadership Award on Tuesday, April 28th, during Blue Line Expo, in Ajax, Ontario. Visit blueline.ca/expo for more.



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Mar 05 2015

HALIFAX - Nova Scotia's minister of justice says she will change legislation so that victims of sexual assault can launch civil lawsuits regardless of when the assault took place.

Lena Metlege Diab says she will bring in an amendment to the Limitation of Actions Act during the spring session of the legislature.

Diab says the amendment would only affect civil litigation involving victims of sexual assault.

Diab says the decision comes after reviewing the laws of other jurisdictions across the country.

Mar 05 2015

WINNIPEG - The Manitoba Law Reform Commission is recommending the province change the wording in the Highway Traffic Act to make the rules about reporting unsafe drivers clearer.

Currently, doctors and optometrists have a legal duty to report someone who shouldn't be driving because of a medical condition.

But the commission says not everyone is complying.

It cites an Ontario study that concludes unsafe drivers often go to the doctor, but are rarely reported to licensing authorities.

Commission spokeswoman Elizabeth McCandless says other research showed some doctors worried about the privacy implications and were unclear whether it's mandatory to report or not.

She says doctors are also reluctant to report because they're worried about how it will jeopardize their relationship with their patient. (CJOB)

Mar 05 2015

WATERLOO REGION - An officer who was fired by the Waterloo Regional Police Service for leaking confidential information to a member of the public lost his appeal before a civilian commission.

Const. Craig Markham, an officer of 11 years, was ordered to resign. He quit last month.

The Ontario Civilian Police Commission dismissed Markham's appeal and upheld the 2014 decision by hearing officer Pat Dietrich, a superintendent with Waterloo Regional Police, stating that Markham's conduct was a serious breach and he must be terminated.

The commission released its decision Feb. 13 and Markham quit on Feb. 18.

Markham, 37, was charged with breach of confidence, insubordination and discreditable conduct after he released private information on someone who was in custody to the person's partner.

In his judgment, Dietrich said Markham's actions were not only careless and reckless but "insidious."

Dietrich said Markham's actions showed a disregard for his officer's oath and tarnished the reputation of the police service.

Chief Bryan Larkin said the dismissal of the appeal sends a strong message to the service and the community.

The hearing was told that Markham was working the front desk at the Kitchener detachment when a friend, who had ties to a biker gang, was arrested on drug trafficking charges. The officer received a text from the man's common-law wife and he logged onto a police computer to call up a report on the investigation.

Markham went to the holding cell and passed on information to the arrested man as surveillance cameras recorded the meeting.

Markham was charged criminally with breach of trust. After pleading guilty, he was given a conditional discharge in October 2012.

He also received a year of probation and 100 hours of community service and no criminal record.

(The Record)

Mar 05 2015

OTTAWA - The cash-strapped RCMP drew nearly \$330,000 from its overtime budget in the hours and days following the Oct. 22 shootings in downtown Ottawa, document obtained by CBC News under the Access to Information Act reveal.

The RCMP spent the money from Oct. 22-24 to cover staffing costs for local officers and those brought in from outside the capital to handle the stepped-up security on Parliament Hill and surrounding areas, the documents reveal.

An RCMP spokesman said the shooting incurred significant costs that the force will have to pay for from their own budget.

Rob Creasser, a spokesman for the Mounted Police Professional Association of

Canada, said the budget is stretched so thin already that the overtime bill will have an impact.

"That's robbing Peter to pay Paul. That means somewhere, somebody down the line isn't going to get a new piece of equipment or isn't going to get the resources they need to do their job," Creasser said. "It's an inadequate response."

The Ottawa Police Service faced an even larger overtime bill — about \$375,000 — to pay their officers before the investigation was turned over to the RCMP.

"At the end of the day this is above and beyond what we can really contribute to that event," said Eli El-Chantiry, the chair of the police services board. "In our situation, that is very important to us because, really, it comes from the heart of the organization when you talk about \$375,000 — that's not small change."

In a letter dated Feb. 5, 2015, the Office of the Mayor of Ottawa asked the federal government to foot \$375,000 bill.

"This was necessary but has created a budget pressure for the service as it was unplanned and significant," the letter said. "The nature of the events required the deployment of virtually all available sworn and civilian members for an 18-24 hour period and then an increased deployment for the days leading up to November 11."

(CBC News)

Mar 05 2015

The RCMP had no data to back up their claims that medical marijuana grow operations under Canada's old licensing system were inherently dangerous to producers and magnets for violent thieves and organized criminals, an expert told the Federal Court Thursday.

RCMP Corporal Shane Holmquist, a supervisor on the Federal Serious Organized Crime Section's marijuana enforcement team, made headlines last year when he filed his affidavit in this case stating there was an "overwhelming temptation" for growers licensed under the old federal medical marijuana system to divert extra pot to the black market. His affidavit also stated that such producers face risks from mould, fire and electrical hazards and also attract organized crime groups because, quoting a 2005 RCMP report, "marijuana cultivation and trafficking represents the single most common (and most lucrative) activity pursued by organized crime."

Concerns about criminal activity formed part of the rationale that led Health Canada to overhaul its medical marijuana system last year to strictly license only industrial-scale production in secure commercial facilities.

Cpl. Holmquist was testifying at a case involving the constitutional challenge by four plaintiffs alleging that their Section 7 Charter rights were violated when the federal government enacted the new system that outlawed their personal grow operations. They say they can't afford marijuana under the new system, which also doesn't give them control over

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the specific strains they use. They are asking the court to force the government to allow patients to grow their own marijuana, which many licensed Canadians kept doing after the Federal Court judge granted an injunction to the four plaintiffs in March of last year pending the outcome of this legal challenge.

During cross examination Thursday, Cpl. Holmquist said the RCMP had no data on how many of the roughly 28,000 people authorized to grow their own pot, or have another licensee do it for them, were subverting or abusing the old system. He said he had been a part of more than 100 investigations into licensed producers, but had not collected statistical data on any of them.

John Conroy, lead counsel for the four plaintiffs fighting to keep growing their own medical marijuana, said the evidence the RCMP relied on was "very thin" and may implicate no more than 300 licensed producers that are abusing the system in such ways.

"They've done certainly no social science research, comparative analysis, random sampling and so on, as counsel has been demonstrating," Mr. Conroy said during the lunch break. "The substantial majority of these people, I'm talking 99.9 per cent or 98 per cent, were doing everything properly and legally.

"I'm not surprised because most people who are trying to do something for themselves try to do it right, try to do it properly and not cause harm to themselves or anybody else."

A 2009 RCMP review found 40 cases of licence holders selling excess marijuana for profit, and Cpl. Holmquist's affidavit stated that there were four violent thefts at licensed B.C. producers in 2009 and 11 the following year.

His affidavit stated that between 2003 and 2013, there were 14 homicides related to grow-op thefts in B.C.'s Lower Mainland, but during cross-examination Cpl. Holmquist said there was no evidence that any of those were at licensed production facilities.

Cpl. Holmquist said it is very difficult to know how deeply organized criminals have penetrated the medical marijuana production system because of the inherent secrecy surrounding most of these groups.

Mr. Conroy said there is no doubt some people hid behind licences to abuse the system for profit by selling to the black market and that some organized crime groups may have "compromised patients," but the vast majority did not abuse the old system.

He said most of the RCMP's concerns around fire and electrical safety risks at the licensed grow operations are "greatly exaggerated" and remedial actions can be enforced safely by Health Canada.

For example, he said licensees growing in their homes could be forced to buy \$3,000 "bloom boxes," which encase the crop and protect it from fire, electrical safety risks, humidity and odour.

The trial is expected to last into May and next week legal experts on medical marijuana reform from the United States, the Netherlands and Israel are slated to testify.

(Globe and Mail)

Mar 05 2015

MONTREAL - Despite serving a life sentence for murder, it seems that ex-outlaw biker Maurice "Mom" Boucher is still running the Montreal underworld from prison, police sources say.

The name of the former Hells Angels chief has come up in a police investigation into a drug trafficking network in the city, according to the sources.

Police suspect that despite his current accommodation in a maximum-security prison, the 61-year-old one-time president of the gang's Montreal chapter is running the show with help from a family member on the outside.

No charges have been laid so far in the investigation.

Boucher was sentenced to life in prison in 2002 for ordering the murders of prison guards Diane Lavigne and Pierre Rondeau, and is not eligible for parole until 2022.

Since being jailed he has survived two assassination attempts and now resides in an ultra-maximum-security wing of the prison, where more than 50 cameras give guards constant supervision, according to Correctional Services Canada."

(QMI Agency)

Mar 05 2015

SASKATOON - Saskatoon's police chief says The Lighthouse has been a saviour for his officers despite controversy surrounding the supported living unit on 20th Street.



"We would be lost in the city without The Lighthouse," Chief Clive Weighill said.

"It has helped us out a lot. It gives us some stable housing overnight for people that need it. It has allowed us to take people there that are intoxicated that have not committed a criminal offence but they have been a bit of a nuisance, rather than putting them in our police cells they can get housed at The Lighthouse."

The issue of encountering people on the streets with mental health issues is not unique to Saskatoon, according to Weighill. It's a societal problem in every major city in Canada.

Currently, officers will visit The Lighthouse between 60 to 90 times per month. Some of those occurrences include giving a ride to a resident.

While The Lighthouse has been a "big game changer for the mosaic of the City of Saskatoon to keep people off the street that are wandering around," Weighill said.

Mar 05 2015

ORILLIA - Despite a scathing ruling by a judge who found Orillia Sgt. Russ

Watson "karate kicked" and "sucker punched" a helpless woman, he remains in good standing as a police officer, the OPP confirms.

Wednesday, Ontario's Special Investigation Unit (SIU) announced it would reopen an investigation into Watson regarding Orillia resident Tonie Farrell's injuries.

The grandmother of two received what the judge called "catastrophic" injuries when she acted as a "Good Samaritan" during an incident outside an Orillia convenience store April 2, 2013. She has undergone several surgeries for a shattered knee, a broken tibia and other injuries and will permanently need a cane and a scooter.

While Farrell was initially charged with assaulting Watson, Justice George Beatty found her not guilty and said it was the officer who laid a beating on Farrell for no reason.

"Sgt. Watson is a large and powerfully built man," the judge said in his ruling, noting Farrell weighed 140 pounds. "There is no doubt that she would be in pain from multiple injuries and was trying to cover her face from further damage."

The SIU took photographs of Farrell's injuries but found no grounds to lay charges against Watson. However, following the judge's ruling, the SIU announced it would revisit the case.

"As a result of comments made by Justice Beatty in his 'reasons for judgment' regarding the conduct of Sgt. Watson, the SIU decided to review the file, including the judge's reasons and the transcripts from Ms. Farrell's trial, to assess whether there were grounds to reopen the investigation.

"As a result of that review, the SIU has reopened the investigation," spokesperson Monica Hudon said in a statement Wednesday.

OPP Sgt. Peter Leon confirmed Watson remains on the job as a sergeant with Orillia OPP and there have been no findings against him.

(QMI Agency)

**FRIDAY
MARCH 06, 2015**

Mar 06 2015

OTTAWA - The federal privacy watchdog says the scope of the Conservative government's anti-terrorism bill is excessive and that it puts the personal information of Canadians at risk.

In a submission to the House of Commons public safety committee, Daniel Therrien says measures in the bill to protect against unreasonable loss of privacy are seriously deficient.

Therrien says all Canadians would be caught in this web.

He says the bill could make available all federally held information about someone to 17 government departments and agencies with responsibilities for national security.

Therrien says the legislation sets the threshold for sharing Canadians' personal data far too low.

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In addition, he's concerned the bill sets no clear limits on how long the information would be kept.

Mar 06 2015

OTTAWA - The man who gunned down a soldier and stormed Parliament Hill last Oct. 22 said his actions were spurred by Canada's military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In a grainy cellphone video made shortly before his attack, Michael Zehaf Bibeau speaks of assaulting soldiers to show Canadians they are not safe in their own country.

Zehaf Bibeau asks Allah to accept his actions and says Canadians have forgotten God by occupying and killing righteous people in Muslim lands.

In showing the video to the House of Commons public safety committee, RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson said a total of 18 seconds had been edited from the beginning and end for operational reasons.

Zehaf Bibeau fatally shot honour guard Cpl. Nathan Cirillo at the National War Memorial in October before rushing into Parliament Hill's Centre Block, where he was gunned down.

Paulson said the RCMP considers Zehaf Bibeau a terrorist. The Mounties are still trying to determine if anyone collaborated with him.

Two days earlier, an attacker with jihadist sympathies struck and killed Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent with a car in Quebec.

The two assaults spurred the federal government to introduce controversial anti-terrorism legislation that would broaden the mandate of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

Mar 06 2015

Quebec police say the white powder found in envelopes sent to the riding offices of the four federal cabinet ministers from the province was harmless.

Provincial police spokesman Richard Gagne says none of the four envelopes contained a noxious product of any kind.

He says authorities know what the substance is but won't reveal that for now because it's an important element in their investigation.

Gagne also said in an interview today it's believed the same person or persons were responsible.

The envelopes were discovered Thursday in the riding offices of Denis Lebel, the Conservative minister responsible for Quebec, and three other cabinet ministers - Christian Paradis, Maxime Bernier and Steven Blaney.

Certain media reported the envelope sent to Lebel's office contained a warning the Conservatives would be annihilated.

Mar 06 2015

WOODSTOCK, Ont. - Brantford, Ont., police have charged a former Woodstock police officer with breach of trust.

Woodstock police say the charges stem from an incident that occurred while the officer was employed with the Woodstock Police Service.

Woodstock police launched an internal investigation in January, and requested assistance from Brantford police to conduct the probe.

Spokeswoman Sgt. Debbie Peterman says William McLeod of Woodstock resigned from the Woodstock Police Service in February and is to appear in court on April 14.

Mar 06 2015

EDMONTON - Two Edmonton police officers have been charged with selling anabolic steroids.

The police service says it became aware of allegations in 2013 and contacted the Alberta government, which directed the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team to investigate.

The police service says it developed an internal service directive prohibiting the use or possession of steroids without a prescription after it became aware of the allegations.

Sgt. Greg Lewis, a 10-year member, is charged with trafficking in a controlled substance, while Const. Darren French, a 25-year member, is charged with trafficking in a controlled substance.

Both Lewis and French are off duty without pay and are to make their first appearance in court on April 10.

It's alleged that between 2007 and 2013, Lewis sold stanazolol, also known as Winstrol, as well as selling testosterone between 2008 and 2009 and trafficking methyl-1-testosterone.

French is alleged to have trafficked stanazolol between 2007 and 2008.

All are controlled substances under the Controlled Drug and Substance Act.

Susan Hughson, executive director of ASIRT, said French and Lewis are alleged to have sold the steroids to other officers.

"It should be noted that there is no evidence to suggest that the trafficking in steroids in this case was commercial operation or that it was done for commercial gain," Hughson said at a news conference Friday afternoon.

"This investigation focused on a core group of individuals. Additionally, although there is the possibility that the problem of trafficking in steroids extended beyond this group, there is no evidence to support the inference that this is a systemic or pervasive problem throughout the Edmonton police service."

Mar 06 2015

TORONTO - The chief of the country's biggest municipal police force spoke out Friday against proposed life-in-prison legislation, calling it a "political calculation."

Two days after the Conservative government announced plans to table the bill, which would make certain types of murderers ineligible for parole, Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair said his experience as an officer makes him wary of such a drastic change.

"I think we've got a system that works," said Chief Blair, in response to a question about the proposed bill from an audience

member at a Rotary Club lunch in Toronto. "I think that our criminal justice system reflects Canadian values, and I would hope that we would cling to those values, as opposed to whatever the political calculation of the day might be."

Chief Blair, whose 10-year tenure heading the Toronto Police Service will end April 25, has been approached by the federal Liberal and Conservative parties about entering, according to organizers from both parties.

On Friday, he said he won't announce his plans while serving as chief - but he jokingly said to expect news on April 26, "probably around midnight, maybe just shortly thereafter." He said he would like to take another public-service job and has had several offers.

On Friday, he said he felt police chiefs should try to stay out of and "just advocate for public safety."

"My sense is that particular rhetoric is a little political, and mostly intended as political," he said. "Having said that, I spent a lot of my life locking up bad guys, and there are some people, quite frankly, so dangerous that the rest of the world needs to be protected from them. ... But I also believe, because I've sent a lot of people to jail and I've received them all back when they come out, [that] I think we've got a great system in this country."

(Globe and Mail)

Mar 06 2015

PRINCE GEORGE - The federal police force is looking to balance the scales in air support.

An aircraft swap is planned for later this year that would bring an RCMP helicopter to Prince George.

There has been no official announcement made regarding the transfer or when it will happen, said RCMP E divisions spokesperson Sgt. Rob Vermeulen, but he confirmed the move would bring the helicopter currently based in the Southeast District in Kamloops to the local North District base.

"B.C.'s Air Services fleet are strategically placed throughout B.C. in order to support our policing services and unique geography," Vermeulen said in a written statement. The force is "re-aligning these resources more effectively" with the swap that would also move a fixed-wing aircraft from Prince George down to the Southeast District, leaving each district with one fixed-wing aircraft and one helicopter.

"It is important to note that the North District comprises 73 per cent of B.C. geographic area, so this realignment is simply a matter of common sense," Vermeulen said.

RCMP use their aircraft for activities such as patrols and surveillance, transporting personnel, evidence and supplies, conducting searches and providing support for frontline members.

Province-wide, Air Services flies more than 23,000 hours per year.

(Prince George Citizen)

WATERLOO REGION - The province is investing an additional \$2 million in the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network to help those with mental health issues and addictions.

The much-needed funding will be ongoing each year to help a growing population of residents coping with mental health issues, said the health network's chief executive officer Bruce Lauckner.

The announcement was made at the Langs Community Health Centre in Cambridge on Friday. Langs serves a wide range of community members from youth to seniors, offering doctors, nurse practitioners, mental health clinicians and dieticians and nutritionists.

The \$2 million will also fund 12 new housing spots for those with persistent mental health issues, counselling for those dealing with eating disorders and self harm, support for people with addictions and money to extend the mobile crisis team working with Waterloo Regional Police as well starting the program in the rural area with Wellington County OPP and Guelph Police Service.

In Waterloo Region, the mobile crisis team involves local police officer and a psychiatric nurse who responds to a call once police arrive.

The pilot project began two years ago with local police and the local chapter of the Canadian Mental Health Association with funding from the health network. Its success lead to an expansion, with the Wellington OPP launching a similar program in about a week and then Guelph police.

Wellington OPP will have a mental health worker in their offices to accompany police on calls.

Waterloo Regional Police Chief Bryan Larkin said a psychiatric nurse is available for 11 hours a day for four days and an extra two hours on the remaining days.

Having a nurse with police reduced the number of apprehensions by 30 per cent and reduced the long wait times officers spend at hospitals accompanying those in crisis, he said.

In 2014, local police responded to 3,465 incidents related to attempted suicide and other mental health crisis situations. That's up by 21 per cent from the previous year, Larkin said.

Last year, the nurse attended to 699 police calls, compared to 385 calls in 2013. With the nurse responding to calls, police were able to reduce the apprehensions and keep people in their homes rather than going to the hospital.

"Everyday the police come in contact with those with mental health concerns. We are not the best agency to respond," he told those gathered for the announcement.

More than 75 per cent of police work is not crime-related, but has more to do with public and public well-being, Larkin said.

The mobile crisis team lowered hours spent at hospital and often diffused situations and calmed down the person in crisis.

"This is about better care for our community," he said.

Larkin said he would like to see police

calls involving officers as well as a psychiatric nurse, a social worker and a worker with Family and Children's Services.

Insp. Scott Lawson of Wellington OPP said he's pleased the health network along with the Canadian Mental Health Association will help police cope with mental health patients in the rural communities.

Lawson said police are called out to three attempted suicides a day. In 10 years, the number of attempted suicides climbed by 44 per cent, while those who have died from suicide are up by 200 per cent.

He said police are "not equipped" to deal with these issues
(The Record)

Mar 06 2015

CALGARY - Calgary's outgoing police chief Rick Hanson has set his sights on a seat in the Legislature.



It's confirmation of what many political observers already suspected almost immediately upon his surprise retirement announcement last month.

Sun sources say Calgary's top cop will seek nomination, likely in the northeast riding of Calgary Cross left open by the departure of the only MLA the 22-year-old riding has ever known, Yvonne Fritz.

Fritz announced her own retirement in early February, one among a string of veteran Tory benchers to call it quits ahead of an anticipated spring election.

Hanson declined to comment Friday at a graduation ceremony for CPS recruits.

He announced his resignation with "mixed emotions" at a Feb. 25 press conference, where he first dodged questions about what his intentions are for a post-CPS career.

Long thought to have political aspirations, the 40-year veteran cop played coy when asked the question.

"Since I've been here, every year I've been retiring, every year I've been running for mayor, alderman, or moving on somewhere else," he said then.

"Since the word's got out, do I get phone calls? Yes.

"So we'll see where that takes me."

(Calgary Sun)

Mar 06 2015

CALGARY - Beginning his career Monday as a Calgary Police officer, Const. Jeremy Befus will have some big shoes to fill.

Graduating with Class 208 at Mewata

Armoury on Friday after completing 27 weeks of training, Jeremy, 22, was handed his badge by his grandfather, Gerry Befus -- who retired from the force in 1991 as a superintendent -- and his father, Robb Befus -- who retired in 2007 as a staff sergeant.

"From what I've heard they have pretty good reputations here in the service," said Jeremy.

"So I feel like I have a lot to live up to and I want to do all that I can to try and fill those shoes."

It's believed the Befus family is the first to have three generations serve with CPS.

Noting his father and grandfather as big influences on him growing up, Jeremy said it was while he was in high school that he decided to look at policing seriously as a career.

"I originally wanted to be a pilot, actually," he said.

"Then I woke up one day and decided I didn't want to do that anymore, so I started thinking about this."

Naturally, Jeremy talked with his father and grandfather before making a final decision.

"They said it was a great career and they loved their time they spent here so that kind of drew me in," he said.

And both the senior Befus men have plenty of advice for Jeremy, and the rest of his recruit class.

"Work hard, be honourable all the time and do your job to the best of your ability, that's pretty much all you can say," said Gerry.

Manners, said Robb, are often a police officer's best tool.

"I always told Jeremy, always be nice," said Robb.

"If you have to do what you have to do, you can go to that next level, but always be nice to everyone you deal with first.

"People are always much nicer to deal with if you are nice."

Jeremy's first shift will be Monday, when he starts doing regular patrols.

"Something new every day," he said on what's he's most looking forward to.

"Interacting with people and being able to help the public, those are the biggest reasons why I decided to pursue this career."

(Sun Media)

Mar 06 2015

WINNIPEG - The City of Winnipeg has conflicting dates on when its police service will move into its new headquarters.

The controversial project, which involves refurbishing the former Canada Post building on Graham Avenue, is at least \$75 million over its original budget and is already the focus of an RCMP investigation into how contracts were awarded for the work.

Police members were supposed to move into the building in January 2014, but construction problems and water damage caused by a rain storm in August pushed the date back.

In a news release issued on Friday afternoon, city officials said work on the building is "nearing completion," with a "summer move-in anticipated."

"The City will tentatively take possession

this summer,” the news release states in part.

But the project’s latest financial status report, which will be reviewed by council’s finance committee next week, says the police service aims to assume occupancy of the building this fall.

“Once the occupancy permit has been issued and Total Completion achieved, the City and WPS will work to address any building systems safeguards before WPS divisions occupy the building in the fall of 2015,” the report states in part.

Earlier in the day, acting police chief Art Stannard was asked if the service will move into the new headquarters this spring or summer.

“I don’t know. I can’t say,” he told reporters.

The news release says the project is expected to stay within its current budget, as costs related to the water damage from August are being submitted as an insurance claim, according to officials.

The committee will review the administrative report on March 12. You can read the document below.

(CBC News)

SATURDAY MARCH 07, 2015

Mar 07 2015

A 36-year-old man has been charged after allegedly nearly crashing into a police cruiser in Sylvan Lake and then choking a police officer while being arrested.

According to police, two RCMP officers were on patrol in Sylvan Lake Friday morning when they saw a vehicle swerve to avoid a parked car. The vehicle almost crashed head-on with the police car before knocking over a power pole and crashing into a cement barrier.

The man driving the car then fled on foot. When officers caught up to him, they allege he was able to choke one of them before being arrested by the other.

The officer who was choked was taken to hospital in Red Deer and later released.

A man now faces seven charges, including impaired driving, resisting arrest and assaulting a peace officer.

He is set to appear in court on March 23.

(CBC News)

SUNDAY MARCH 08, 2015

Mar 08 2015

As police boards across the GTA pull back on spending and new hires, York Region council has approved a police budget that could see as many as 180 police staff hired over the next four years.

York Region approved a \$2.7-billion budget, with an increase of 2.97 per cent for 2015. They also approved the York Regional Police budget — including a request to hire

33 officers and 13 civilian staff in 2015.

The York Regional Police service says additional officers are needed to deal with population growth in the large municipality, although the force’s own statistics show the region is one of the safest in Canada.

“There is a misperception that crime rate is the only key performance indicator on how a police service performs,” said Jeffrey Channell, manager of financial services for the police service. “But there is quite a bit more to it.”

Crime prevention, law enforcement, assistance to victims of crime and emergency response are all important elements of policing, he said.

In a presentation to council earlier this month, Chief Eric Jolliffe said the 2014 crime rate was down compared with the previous year, and only 20 per cent of calls received were crime-related. The rest were about non-criminal issues including missing persons, mental health crises, community engagement and community events.

The force had put forward an operating budget of \$287 million, an increase of 3.2 per cent over last year. Channell said that’s the lowest hike in 19 years and that, per capita, York is still one of the most efficient forces in the GTA.

Last week, councillors finalized the 2015 budget, including the police budget. About 30 cents of every regional tax dollar is spent on police.

Toronto police have also faced intense pressure to keep costs down. Last year, the force had a zero increase in the budget, and recently found \$5 million in cuts. Durham Regional Police also presented council with a 1.59 per cent increase, and have hired no additional officers for the past six budgets.

In addition to hiring more officers this year, the York Region police force is building a new \$30.4-million training facility in East Gwillimbury and a \$2.5-million marine headquarters on Lake Simcoe in Georgina.

(Toronto Star)

Mar 08 2015

OTTAWA - The RCMP is tracking and investigating a “steadily increasing” number of suspected extremists, according to Commissioner Bob Paulson.

Speaking to CTV’s Question Period, Paulson said the RCMP is seeing an increase in such cases in certain areas of the country.

“It’s steadily increasing,” said Paulson. “In Alberta, we’re seeing a steady increase in the kind of files that are coming into the police. In Ontario, increasing. In Montreal, increasing.”

Security officials have said that more than 140 Canadians have left the country to fight with extremist groups overseas. While Paulson said this number has increased, he would not say by how much.

“I’m trying to get out of the numbers business; it’s increasing, the number of people that we are tracking and investigating,” he said.

Despite the new powers proposed in Bill C-51, Paulson said that’s not what the RCMP needs most right now.

“We’re spending all of our money and we need more,” said Paulson.

Last Friday, Paulson told the committee that the 600 RCMP officers and staff have been reassigned to work on counter-terrorism — an increase of 300 officers since the Oct. 22 attack. While he recognizes that “times are tough (and) money’s scarce,” Paulson said the RCMP is working to make the case for more money from the federal government — something he thinks is being received well.

“The cheque’s in the mail I hope,” said

Paulson.

(CTV News)

MONDAY MARCH 09, 2015

Mar 09 2015

VANCOUVER - A decision by Metro Vancouver Transit Police to release a detailed description of an alleged sex assault victim is sparking outrage among some advocates.

Irene Tsepnopoulos-Elhaimer of Women Against Violence Against Women says the police should never have issued a news release that included identifying details of the young woman.

She says many women have good reasons not to report sexual assaults to police, and victims deserve to feel they have a choice in the matter.

Transit Police issued a public plea last week for the woman to come forward, after a witness reported seeing a man grope her on the Canada Line SkyTrain.

The witness also posted a photo of the alleged assault -- in which the suspect and victim’s faces were not visible -- on Facebook, where it went viral.

Transit Police spokeswoman Anne Drennan says the force would never publish such a photo, but they released a description because officers want the victim to come forward so they can investigate the suspect.

Mar 09 2015

EDMONTON - Alberta’s former chief medical examiner says the coroner computer system is so flawed, staff can go in and change a cause of death without a trace.

Anny Sauvageau also says that people with criminal records are allowed to transport bodies from crime scenes, giving them control over a critical legal chain of evidence.

The allegations are made in a new court filing by Sauvageau, who is suing the province after her contract was not renewed late last year.

She says she was let go because she raised concerns over how the province handles forensic examinations.

She says that in 2011 she inherited a profoundly dysfunctional office with so little oversight, guns from crime scenes were disappearing, and one staffer even took a firearm home.

The province says Sauvageau was not rehired because she had overstepped her bounds of authority and was not getting along well with others.

Mar 09 2015

QUEBEC CITY - Quebec City police admit one of their officers crossed the line by ordering a jaywalker to speak French while receiving a ticket.

Douglas Kitson, an English-speaking resident of the provincial capital, said the cop even claimed it's illegal to speak English.

Kitson admits he was jaywalking when he was stopped and ticketed late last month.

"One of the officers spoke to me and I answered in English," he said. "She replied in great English, much better than my French. She said, 'We are in Quebec, you must speak French.'"

Kitson asked her if the law requires he speak French.

"She actually said yes," he claimed.

Police spokesman Francois Moisan said the officer was wrong.

"You can't force someone to answer us in French if the person isn't comfortable or doesn't know the language," Moisan said.

But he added: "(The police) are not required to speak in English, either."

(QMI Agency)

Mar 09 2015

MONTREAL - Montreal is going to open up a centre that aims to stop violent radicalization among youth.

Mayor Denis Coderre says the new centre brings together health professionals, law enforcement and educational and social service workers.

Coderre says the centre will work with all communities and would help anyone in danger - whether it be from terrorism-related radicalization or youth in danger of joining street gangs.

He told a news conference today the city is working to have the prevention centre up an running as soon as possible.

For now, the city has activated a phone number that will direct callers to the Montreal police if they have any concerns or questions.

Coderre said any information would be confidential and it would be used to provide assistance.

Mar 09 2015

OTTAWA - The executive director of the watchdog that keeps an eye on the Canadian Security Intelligence Service is questioning whether the review body will have enough resources to do its job in the future.

Michael Doucet, executive director of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, says the watchdog will see a smaller slice of CSIS's activities in coming years.

Two bills before Parliament would reinforce the spy agency's long-standing ability to operate abroad and give it extensive new powers to disrupt security threats, rather than just gather information.

Doucet told the Senate national security committee that his agency's annual budget has essentially been flat over the last number of years at about \$3 million.

He says the agency has enough resources to handle complaints about CSIS, certify the spy service's annual report to the public safety minister, and carry out seven or eight reviews of various issues.

However, Doucet wonders whether that will be sufficient to "cover the waterfront" of CSIS's activities as the spy agency does more.

Mar 09 2015

WINNIPEG - The federal government has won a legal battle against the former president of the Manitoba Hells Angels over property seized under proceeds-of-crime legislation.

Court of Queen's Bench Justice Rick Saull ruled Monday that five items were legally taken from Dale Sweeney following his 2012 arrest in Winnipeg.

They included a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, a Corvette, a Silverado, a boat and a trailer.

One of Sweeney's friends had stepped forward and claimed he was the rightful owner of the property and should have it returned immediately.

But Saull ruled that claim didn't seem reasonable, calling the man a "nominee" of Sweeney's who tried to pull the wool over the court's eyes.

More than \$800,000 worth of Sweeney's assets were frozen following his arrest in Project Flatlined, a Winnipeg police crackdown of a large dial-a-dealer operation.

He is serving 11 years in prison.

In addition to these five items his friend claimed to own, the government also took possession of Sweeney's house.

At least some, if not all, of the property has already been sold by the federal government at auction. The net proceeds then go into a federal fund that deals with these types of forfeiture matters.

(Winnipeg Free Press)

Mar 09 2015

An illegal drug infiltrating the Blood Tribe in southern Alberta has prompted community leaders to call a state of emergency.

At least 10 deaths on the First Nation have been linked to the street drug Oxy 80, or fake Oxycodone. The pill contains fentanyl — a potent opioid-based pain killer that has a high risk of overdose.

"It was a concern from not only our local physician, but also our community in general," said Lance Tailfeathers who sits on the band's council. "It was actually public outcry."

It's believed organized crime groups are pushing Oxy 80 in the area. The Blood Tribe has recently dedicated two full-time officers to drug and gang related investigations, officials say.

The chief and council passed a resolution on Friday declaring a local state of emergency to draw attention to the situation and bring more services and support to the community,

Tailfeathers said.

Council has already secured 47 kits containing Naloxone — a medication used to counter Oxy 80 overdoses.

"There's a five-minute window to administer it, but you still have to get the person medical attention within about an hour," said Tailfeathers.

The First Nation plans to hand out the Naloxone kits strategically to families and patients in the community and eventually to schools.

A e-mail address has been set up for reserve residents get information to police anonymously.

"These efforts have resulted in numerous charges and significant disruption of drug activity in the past two months," Blood Tribe police officials said in a release.

Band council is meeting with the Alberta Emergency Management Agency and the First Nations Inuit and Health Branch on Monday to discuss the next steps.

(CBC News)

Mar 09 2015

It's never too soon for young drivers to learn bad habits.

That was especially clear on Sunday, when B.C. Mounties pulled over a new motorist who was zooming at least 45 kilometres an hour over the speed limit outside Kelowna.

In the passenger seat, officers found the lead-foot's mom providing supervision.

Const. Kris Clark said the pair was handed a hefty ticket and the car was impounded at the owner's expense, a lesson the RCMP hopes other parents will heed.

"You're the supervisor of that particular driver," Clark said. "They're not able to be on their own at that particular point, so it's your responsibility to ensure that they're driving safely and obeying the rules."

The vehicle had an "L" decal visible, according to the RCMP.

Mounties said they had a field day nabbing speeders in the area on Sunday, and handed out no fewer than nine excessive speeding tickets. Three of the recipients were new drivers.

Excessive speeding tickets range from \$368 to \$483 in B.C.

(CTV News)

Mar 09 2015

Three senior Ontario Provincial Police union officials — one a former Liberal candidate — have stepped aside in the wake of an RCMP criminal probe.

The dramatic move Monday followed a raid Friday by the Mounties who swooped in to the OPP Association headquarters in Barrie armed with a search warrant.

Sources close to the association told the Star that RCMP investigators are examining financial matters at the police union.

RCMP Const. Jean Juneau said the search warrant has been ordered sealed by an Ontario Superior Court judge.

That means details of evidence sought by the Mounties cannot yet be made public.

But Juneau emphasized “no charges are imminent” in an investigation that began only recently.

He would not comment further on the warrant, saying officers were searching for “evidence that could help in our investigation.”

“We’ll see later on if charges are deemed necessary.”

Association president Jim Christie, vice-president Martin Bain, and chief administrative officer Karl Walsh “have taken voluntary leaves of absence,” the union said in a statement.

Walsh, who was the provincial Liberal candidate in Barrie during the 2011 election, has been placed on administrative leave by the OPPA’s board of directors.

“The RCMP is conducting a criminal investigation and believed that evidence to support its investigation could be found in the OPP Association Head Office as well as the offices of president Christie, vice president Bain and CAO Walsh,” the OPPA said.

On his LinkedIn profile, Walsh also identifies himself as a director of the Ontario Pension Board, which administers the \$18-billion Public Service Pension Plan sponsored by the Ontario government.

He also served as president of the OPPA from October 2005 to March 2011, when he became the association’s chief administrative officer, responsible for its then \$70-million budget.

Christie made headlines in last June’s provincial election when he had the union actively campaign against then Progressive Conservative leader Tim Hudak.

“For the first time in the 60-year history of the OPPA, Tim Hudak has given us no choice but to engage in a publicity campaign during an election,” Christie said at the time.

The union released two videos attacking the Tories for wanting to cancel OPP contracts, reduce pay, and cut pension plans for new recruits.

Their activism was helpful to Premier Kathleen Wynne’s Liberals in the June 12 election, though Christie played down that aspect of the OPPA’s politicking.

“These ads do not serve as an endorsement for the Liberals or the NDP. This also does not mean that we don’t respect and work well with many in the Conservative caucus. We just don’t want this Conservative as premier.”

In the wake of the RCMP warrant, the OPPA said it is “in the process of obtaining specialized independent legal advice with respect to this matter” and will not be commenting further.

“The association has fully co-operated with the RCMP investigation by providing them with the items identified in their search warrant,” the union said in its statement.

“These actions should not be considered admissions or implications of wrongdoing or liability by anyone or by the association. The association has no knowledge of any charges being laid against any persons at this time.”

There are about 6,200 uniformed and 3,600 civilian members of the OPPA, which is currently in contract talks with the provincial government.

With the temporary departure of Christie, Bain, and Walsh — who did not immediately respond to emails from the Star — Doug Lewis will act as president, Todd Provost will serve as acting vice-president, and Michael Briscoe will step as CAO.

(Toronto Star)

Mar 09 2015

WINDSOR - More drug charges have been laid against a suspended Windsor police officer.

David Bshouty was charged with trafficking of a controlled substance Monday.

The investigation was launched several months ago, police said.

Windsor’s Police Chief said charges under the Police Act are pending.

CBC News contacted Windsor’s Police Association. Officials said they have no comment on the charges as the case is before the courts.

Bshouty still faces a previous charge of possession of a controlled substance in Windsor. It was laid in April of 2014. It stems from a different incident. It is in relation to a small quantity of tablets suspected by police to be Oxycodone, a prescription narcotic.

Bshouty was arrested and charged last year by American authorities for possession of cocaine.

In April 2013 Bshouty was accused of trying to smuggle cocaine across the border, from Windsor into Detroit.

At the time, authorities found what they thought was cocaine. An initial test seemed to support that theory. But then there was a new test.

Apparently, whatever Bshouty was carrying when he was arrested April 12, it wasn’t illegal.

Charges laid in Michigan in that incident were dropped last June.

Bshouty has been a member of the Windsor Police Service since 2009.

(CBC News)

Mar 09 2015

Supt. Paul Cook will become the interim head of the Calgary Police Service when Chief Rick Hanson retires Friday.



Cook was tapped Monday by the Calgary Police Commission as officials begin searching for a full-time replacement.

A 25-year veteran of the CPS, Cook “has served in nearly every area of the Calgary Police Service,” said Coun. Diane Colley-Urquhart, who also sits on the police commission board.

“Specifically, Paul has served as a patrol sergeant and later as a district inspector.

“He has spent nearly half his career in

the support section, working in multiple units and moving through the ranks from constable to commander.

“Supt. Cook is a certified hostage negotiator and certified as a national, level 2 incident commander, he has taken extensive advanced police training and he has served in senior, multi-agency positions.”

Cook currently serves as executive officer to Hanson.

The search for a new chief will be done by an international headhunting firm and will likely take several months, said Coun. Ward Sutherland.

One challenge expected, said Sutherland, is the fact Vancouver and Toronto will also be searching for new police chiefs.

“So your pool of candidates might be more limited,” he said.

“We do have good people within but it’s important that we look at everything on a balanced perspective.”

Coun. Sean Chu, himself a Calgary Police officer for 21 years before entering , described Cook as someone with a good sense of humour who is well liked by the rank and file.

“He used to be in the K-9 unit for a long time so we’ve been on many, many calls together, chasing down the bad guys,” he said.

“He’s a great guy, humorous and always there to help you.

“I think most importantly he’s really good with people, especially other police officers, and people really trust him.”

(Calgary Sun)

Mar 09 2015

B.C.’s fugitive return program has hit a milestone with the 100th wanted person shipped out of the province to face outstanding charges.

The latest fugitive was arrested by the Surrey RCMP and was returned to Alberta last month to face assault and failing to appear charges.

He was escorted back to Alberta by B.C. sheriffs, which was funded by the Fugitive Return Program.

The Vancouver Police Dept. is a partner in the program, which the VPD had originally dubbed “Con Air” to denote sending some fugitives by air to other provinces to face outstanding charges.

While any wanted fugitive from another province can be eligible for the program, most face serious criminal charges.

One recent fugitive was returned to Devon, Alberta to face charges of sexual assault, forcible confinement, fleeing from police and dangerous operation of a motor vehicle.

Another man and his two daughters were returned to Calgary on warrants for assault causing bodily harm stemming from an incident that left the victim with semi-permanent paralysis. The daughters allegedly held the victim down while their father beat him.

To date, the fugitives sent from B.C. were returned to six provinces and one territory, with 42 per cent returned to Alberta, followed by Ontario, with 28 per cent of returnees.

A total of 43 per cent of fugitives were

returned from the Lower Mainland, 26 per cent were returned from southeast B.C., 22 per cent were returned from Vancouver Island and nine per cent were returned from northern B.C.

RCMP Cpl. Trish Robinson said Monday the fugitive return program was started in 2012 and 38 fugitives were returned in the first two years.

But the number of fugitives returned has doubled in the last 18 months, she said.

The program is managed by the RCMP but has a joint management team that includes the Vancouver Police. It is funded by the Civil Forfeiture Office and B.C. Sheriff Services under the Court Services Branch.

(Metro)

TUESDAY
MARCH 10, 2015

Mar 10 2015

OTTAWA - New anti-terrorism measures are needed to protect the public from extremists who hate Canadian values, says Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney.



The international jihadi movement has “declared war on Canada” and other countries around the world, Blaney told MPs Tuesday as they began hearing testimony on the federal legislation.

The House of Commons public safety committee plans to hear from more than 50 witnesses over the next few weeks.

The Conservatives brought in the bill, which would broaden the Canadian Security Intelligence Service’s mandate, following the murders of two Canadian soldiers last October.

The legislation would give CSIS the ability to disrupt terror plots, make it easier for police to limit the movements of a suspect, expand no-fly list powers, crack down on terrorist propaganda, and remove barriers to sharing security-related information.

The new disruptive powers do not apply to “lawful” advocacy, protest and dissent, but some critics say they could be used against activists who protest without an official permit.

Blaney took issue with the idea the bill would allow CSIS to trample civil liberties, telling the committee he wanted to “set the record straight.”

Mar 10 2015 A petition to keep Amherstburg’s police department in favour of regional or OPP service now has nearly 1,200 signatures.

The town is looking at outsourcing its

policing to the OPP or the Windsor Police Service.

Darlene Meloche started the petition, which asks town council to keep the force local.

“We’re not saying we hate any of the other police departments. We’re not saying anything negative against anybody,” Meloche said. “All we’re trying to do is let people know that we want the Amherstburg police department to stay local. That’s all we’re trying to do.”

At one point, Windsor suggested LaSalle, Amherstburg and Windsor form a regional police service.

The Amherstburg Police Service employs 31 officers and three civilian employees.

It costs the town \$5.7 million a year.

Amherstburg Police Chief Timothy Berthiaume says he’s flattered by a show of support from the public.

He also says the issue has been stressful.

“The officers aren’t really sure where they will be in the next year or two, so you know it’s a little upsetting for them, but we’re getting through it,” the chief said. “The men and women of the Amherstburg Police Service are coming to work every day and doing the exact same work that they did before the motion was made.”

If Amherstburg does outsource its police department, LaSalle could lose a \$300,000 annual contract.

Currently, LaSalle provides dispatching services for Amherstburg’s police.

“That’s a revenue we would lose,” LaSalle Mayor Antaya previously said.

Amherstburg is looking to outsource policing in an effort to save money and pay down its debt, that some estimate to be \$46 million.

(CBC News)

Mar 10 2015

MONTREAL - Montreal’s police service will slash between 200 and 250 jobs over the next five years, as the city attempts to reduce salary costs.

Montreal police chief Marc Parent confirmed the cuts in an interview with Radio-Canada. Parent says between 40 and 50 jobs will be cut each year, over the next five years.

Parent says the positions will be eliminated by attrition, by not replacing police officers who retire.

The job cuts are expected to save the city up to \$25 million dollars, or \$100,000 for every position that is eliminated.

“This is not something new for us,” said Parent. “The city is scaling back. The police are also part of the city’s services and over the next five years, we also have to review how we can better use our resources and adapt to a new fiscal reality, because the capacity of citizens to pay has really hit its limit.”

Yves Francoeur, president of Montreal’s Police Brotherhood, denounced the cuts in the union’s newsletter. Despite the fact that the city’s crime rate is dropping, Francoeur said police lack resources to address evolving issues, such as terrorism and online crime.

The announcement of the cuts comes as

the police union and the City of Montreal are set to begin negotiations on a new collective agreement next week.

The city is demanding the police union pay back \$18.5 million in fines and traffic tickets, which the Coderre administration claims went uncollected by police, as a pressure tactic against the province’s pension reform.

(CBC News)

Mar 10 2015

VICTORIA - B.C. attorney general says the government is set to introduce Canada’s first mandatory online tribunal system to settle minor disputes involving small claims court and strata councils.

Suzanne Anton says people dealing with such issues will retain the right to take their matters to B.C. Supreme Court, but the new service will become the first stop for an estimated 40,000 minor legal disputes each year.

Anton has introduced amendments to an act that aims to resolve legal disputes in a quick and cost-effective manner.

She says the service will be launched in phases and provide information on how to prevent and resolve disputes.

Anton says the online system will include dispute resolution methods such as negotiation, mediation and adjudication, if necessary.

She says people with strata disputes currently end up in B.C. Supreme Court or try to settle their differences in other ways.

Mar 10 2015

OTTAWA - The federal auditor general has released a damning report on Nunavut’s most infamous jail.

Michael Ferguson’s report cites a litany of problems with the Baffin Correctional Centre.

Those problems include holes in the walls, mould, failure to comply with the national fire code, and housing medium- and maximum-security offenders with minimum-security ones.

The auditor’s report says these put the safety and security of both inmates and jail staff at risk.

Ferguson’s team says the jail held an average of 82 inmates in 2013-14, even though it only has the capacity for 68.

A senior Nunavut official warned in January that the government was likely in breach of constitutional obligations towards prisoners and faced a high risk of civil liability.

Mar 10 2015

An RCMP criminal database remains seriously backlogged six years after Canada’s auditor general warned the out-of-date system was undermining the courts and law enforcement.

The Mounties have failed to keep the information in the Canadian Police Information Centre database, known as CPIC, current, leaving justice officials and police blind to the recent criminal records of thousands of offenders.

The information gap can be two years or more because the RCMP has not yet entered hundreds of thousands of recent criminal records.

A spokesman for the Canadian Police Association says the federal government is focusing on the security of Canadians, yet fails to provide front-line officers with a basic tool.

"There's great concern at the federal level about the security of citizens, but we're calling on (Public Safety) Minister (Steven) Blaney to give us the necessary tools to be able to do our job," Yves Francoeur, vice-president of the police association, said in an interview.

"In certain cases, this could effectively put lives in danger," he said, saying that police need to know the criminal past of suspected terrorists they are monitoring, among others.

Canada's auditor general has twice sounded the alarm about the CPIC database, first in 2009 when there was a serious backlog in updating individuals' criminal record information, and again in 2011 when that backlog had grown far worse. English-language updates were taking 14 months, while in Quebec the backlog stretched for 36 months.

Justice officials say there's been no improvement since.

"Crown prosecutors ... each day have to make crucial decisions about the freedom of an individual and the security of the public with incomplete information, which is totally unacceptable," said Thomas Jacques, spokesman for the Association of Quebec Prosecutors.

The most recent data from the RCMP indicates that in 2013 there were some 400,000 criminal records that had yet to be added to the CPIC database. Local and provincial police forces do keep up-to-date records, but if an offender moves to a new jurisdiction, they can effectively shed their criminal record for up to two years.

"The increased volume of requests and demand for criminal record checks from both criminal justice agencies and the public sector continues to exceed the RCMP's current capacity to respond in a sustainable, timely manner," said Mountie spokesman Sgt. Harold Pfeleiderer, acknowledging the problem remains unsolved.

"Until automation processes for the entire criminal records system is complete, quicker turnaround and sustainable delivery of service will remain a challenge."

The RCMP launched a project in November last year to help address the existing backlog, and has offered to selectively update some criminal records at the specific request of police and prosecutors, he added.

Another RCMP spokesman, Sgt. Greg Cox, later said the backlog is expected to be cleared by March 2017.

CBC News has obtained several examples of Ontario justice-system reports that show no previous convictions for some offenders in the last two years in the CPIC system, yet convictions are recorded for the same period in the Ontario Provincial Police database.

Even some judges have railed against the

RCMP's failure to keep the CPIC information current.

"The public should know that the RCMP is, whatever, four years behind in posting these things and this is not a trivial matter," Justice Elliott Allen told his Kitchener, Ont., courtroom in 2012.

"I mean, I can't sentence people properly on the basis of a four-year gap in information," he said, calling it a "national scandal."

Allen had been told by prosecutors that CPIC showed no convictions since 2008 for a man he was about to sentence, yet a local database showed 12 convictions in that gap period.

(CBC News)



CALGARY - The small Alberta town of Taber has implemented a behaviour bylaw.

It includes a \$75 fine for spitting in public and a \$150 penalty for yelling, screaming or swearing in a public place.

It also allows a police officer to order groups of three people or more to disperse immediately.

But the executive director of the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre at the University of Calgary says it's unlikely the bylaw would hold up in court.

Linda McKay-Panos says she was surprised when she heard about the legislation.

She says it appears unconstitutional, and says swearing or yelling in public is freedom of expression while people are allowed to gather under freedom of association.

McKay-Panos says the Charter of Rights and Freedoms would trump a Taber bylaw.

Mar 11 2015

DENVER - In a warning to law enforcement agencies rushing to equip officers with body cameras after killings by police nationwide, a new report says the devices used by Denver officers during a trial period didn't record most of the use-of-force incidents that occurred.

Denver's independent police monitor, Nicholas Mitchell, also said police used force more often and citizens' complaints against officers rose during the cameras' six-month trial period in the city's busy downtown district. Police officials repeatedly said they expected the cameras would drive down those numbers.

Experts say the early findings released Tuesday are a reminder that the effectiveness of the increasingly popular technology, billed as a tool to improve police accountability, still depends on the officers using it.

Denver officers' body cameras recorded just 21 of 80 documented uses of force in the downtown district during the trial, which ran from June to December, Mitchell found. Thir-

ty-five of the encounters weren't recorded because they involved off-duty officers, who were not required to wear the cameras while moonlighting as security guards.

Police officers wearing the cameras on their lapels or eyeglasses were involved in 45 of the cases. Yet less than half of those were recorded, either because cameras weren't activated or they weren't used in a way that provided worthwhile recordings.

Officers were expected to activate their cameras during a broad range of encounters, including traffic stops and responses to 911 calls. In many cases, officers said situations deteriorated too quickly for them to safely activate their cameras. But Mitchell found that officers often failed to follow policies requiring them to turn on the cameras before initiating an encounter.

Other times, the cameras shifted and were obstructed by officers' clothes, the batteries died or they shut off in the middle of a scuffle.

Mar 11 2015

FALLBROOK, Calif. - A handcuffed man stole a California Highway Patrol cruiser in Southern California and led a 10-mile freeway chase before he was arrested trying to run from the vehicle, authorities said.

CHP Officer Jim Bettencourt told U-T San Diego (<http://bit.ly/1FJ7yu9>) that 25-year-old Aaron Teruya of San Diego was taken back into custody still wearing the cuffs Tuesday in the Fallbrook area.

Teruya had hit another vehicle on Interstate 15 south of Temecula, said the CHP.

Teruya was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence. He was handcuffed and put in the front seat of a CHP SUV.

While the officer was talking to the other driver, Teruya pulled the handcuffs up around his legs and drove away, Bettencourt said.

The officer got in a tow truck and told the driver to follow his car. Teruya was taken back into custody after running into thick brush off a dirt road.

Mar 11 2015

ORILLIA, Ont. - Provincial police say distracted driving is expected to surpass impaired driving as a factor in fatal crashes on roads they patrol for the seventh straight year.

The word comes as the OPP gets set to kick off its annual crackdown on distracted driving on Saturday.

So far this year, provincial police say collision data reveals that driver inattention was a causal factor in 12 of the 51 fatal collisions they investigated.

They say those figures also suggest 2015 will be the seventh consecutive year in which inattentive driving surpasses impaired driving as a causal factor in such crashes.

In five of the fatal incidents this year, police say it was the driver who was found to be driving inattentively who died.

But in two incidents, they say the driver who died did nothing wrong and was driving properly at the time of the collision, and in

three cases, a pedestrian was struck.

Nine of those killed were males and three were females. They range in age from 33 to 88 years old.

"Distracted driving is a danger to all road users," says Chief Supt. Chuck Cox, commander of the OPP's Highway Safety Division.

"We want to see everyone develop and maintain a complete intolerance for distracted driving and make it the socially unacceptable driving behaviour that it should be," he said.

Mar 11 2015

TORONTO - A man Canadian authorities suspect of plotting terror attacks has been kept in custody pending deportation.

A spokesman for the Immigration and Refugee Board confirmed that Jhazab Malik was ordered detained on "security grounds."

According to various media reports, the Canada Border Services Agency arrested the Pakistani man on Monday and accused him of plotting to bomb financial buildings and the U.S. consulate in Toronto.

He is to appear for another detention hearing on Monday.

Malik faces no criminal charges.

His lawyer could not be immediately reached for comment.

Mar 11 2015

PRINCE ALBERT, Sask. - The mayor of a northern Saskatchewan city is pushing for front-line police officers to be armed with carbines.

The Prince Albert Board of Police Commissioners has unanimously approved a motion to have Mayor Greg Dionne lead a campaign to get the guns for police services around the province.

Dionne says it's important that police officers are given the right equipment to do their job.

Officers are currently allowed to have a handgun, a shotgun and a rifle.

The Saskatchewan Police Commission would have to approve carbines before police would have access to them.

Rick Peach, executive director of the police commission, has said he isn't prepared to comment at this time.

But Prince Albert police Chief Troy Cooper says he's confident the police commission is supportive of the move.

Right now, carbines are used by tactical SWAT team members, but aren't available to front-line officers.

Dionne says the shotguns police now have don't work as backup weapons as evidenced, he says, in the shooting deaths of three RCMP officers in New Brunswick last year.

One of the recommendations in a report on the shootings is that carbines should be available to front-line RCMP officers.

"When people hear about the Moncton report, carbines really would have made a difference, and I really do believe after reading the report... I do believe that they would have

saved lives," he said.

Dionne said the move to arm front-line officers in Prince Albert with carbines has been in the works since the Moncton shootings.

Cooper said one of his primary concerns is for the safety of the service's members whose mission is to protect the public.

"And in both those cases, the carbine will do a better job than the current equipment that we have," said Cooper. "We have it, it's available, we have professionally trained staff."

Mar 11 2015

TORONTO - Allegations that different versions of a secretly redesigned guardrail are installed on highways across the U.S. and Canada are unfounded, a joint U.S. task force said Wednesday in a report immediately denounced by a whistleblower as a "whitewash."

In their report, the Federal Highway Administration and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials said they had found no evidence of multiple versions of the ET Plus end terminal on U.S. highways.

"Some folks are saying there's a third version of this device and it has different dimensions, so we went out and measured the dimensions on 1,000 ET Pluses," said Neil Gaffney with the highway administration.

"Turns out the dimensions are consistent and uniform."

Trinity's ET Plus - the end unit of the guardrail - is supposed to absorb impact and guide the rail so a crashing vehicle isn't slamming into the rigid steel end.

American authorities undertook to measuring along with a new round of crash tests amid allegations that Texas-based Trinity Industries had secretly changed the design about to save money, rendering them potentially lethal.

Last year, a Texas-based jury concluded Trinity had committed fraud in a civil action that could lead to US\$700 million in penalties by providing incorrect information to U.S. road authorities.

Joshua Harman, the federal whistleblower who launched the successful fraud action, said the new report in fact proves - rather than debunks the idea - that there are two versions of the Trinity unit.

"It's just the federal government is trying to ignore it," Harman said. "They're trying to whitewash this to where nobody's responsible."

In Canada, several provinces stopped installing the ET Plus last fall and have been awaiting final crash-test results before deciding on further action.

In addition, the town of Stratford, Ont., launched a proposed \$500-million class action against Trinity last month, alleging defects in the redesigned unit could cause guardrails to rip through cars and motorists instead of protecting them in crashes.

Stratford lawyer Matt Baer said the report appears to say the units on the road are in fact

a "secretly modified version." In addition, he said, nothing in the report indicates the units are safe.

In a statement, Trinity said the task force report had validated its defence of its product.

"There is one version of the ET Plus extruder head (and) any claims to the contrary are purely false and misleading," the company said.

"The ET Plus is a robust end terminal system that performs as designed...when properly installed and maintained."

The task force also concluded the units put through crash testing in December and January are the same as those that are on the highways.

Final results of the tests have yet to be made public but are expected within the "coming weeks," Gaffney said.

At least 42 states have stopped installing the units while Virginia is pondering a product recall.

None of the provinces has reported any specific issues with the unit, but said they stopped installing them as a safety precaution and were awaiting the crash-test results before deciding on any further course of action.

Mar 11 2015

OTTAWA - Defence Minister Jason Kenney says a report by a federal watchdog has clearly demonstrated military police were guilty of "wrongdoing and incompetence" in their investigations, and he promises to fix that.



He was responding to questions before a Commons committee Wednesday about the scathing findings of the Military Police Complaints Commission, which conducted an exhaustive investigation into the handling of Cpl. Stuart Langridge's suicide.

The watchdog said it identified "serious flaws" in three separate investigations into Langridge's death, and painted a portrait of a police service where officers were unsupervised and even lacking in basic policing techniques.

The report included 46 recommendations for improvement, the vast majority of which were rejected by the Canadian Forces National Investigative Service, which oversees military cops.

Kenney told the all-party committee that he's only read a summary of the report, but what he has seen is "unacceptable" and promised to meet with the provost marshal.

Col. Rob Delaney, the head of military police, apologized to the family, but a statement from their lawyer on Wednesday called it "completely insincere."

FERGUSON, Mo. - The police chief in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson has resigned in the wake of a scathing Justice Department report prompted by the fatal shooting of an unarmed black 18-year-old by a white police officer.



A city official with knowledge of the situation said Thomas Jackson submitted his resignation letter Wednesday. The official was not authorized to speak about the matter and asked not to be identified. The date of the resignation is still being worked out.

Jackson had previously resisted calls by protesters and some of Missouri's top elected leaders to step down over his handling of the August shooting of Michael Brown and the weeks of sometimes-violent protests that followed.

The U.S. Department of Justice last week issued a report that cleared Officer Darren Wilson of civil rights charges in the shooting but found a profit-driven court system and widespread racial bias in the city police department.

TORONTO - Mounties are looking into the activities of a Toronto-based travel agency that caters to police and other first responders as part of a wider criminal investigation into people connected to the union representing Ontario Provincial Police officers.

First Response Travel Group states in its marketing materials that it offers special rates for police officers, firefighters and paramedics, and identifies itself as a "Division of Leximco." Corporate records show that a director of Leximco Ltd. is Andrew McKay, a Toronto lawyer whose client list includes a number of police associations, including the OPP Association.

Police were observed at Mr. McKay's downtown Toronto offices last Friday, the same day that RCMP executed search warrants at the headquarters of the OPP Association in Barrie, Ont., and at people's homes. Three senior members of the association subsequently stepped aside.

There have been no arrests or charges laid and police have not accused any individuals of wrongdoing. The reasons why the RCMP launched its investigation and conducted the searches is still sealed by the court.

"I understand that the RCMP is conducting an investigation into a complaint and that investigation is ongoing," Mr. McKay said in an email. "As such, it would be improper for me to comment."

Online biographical information shows that Mr. McKay is a former Toronto police investigator. As a lawyer, he specializes in representing police, doctors, lawyers and professional athletes accused of wrongdoing. His LinkedIn profile states that he also operates Amax Security Solutions, a security and investigations company, and Amax Intelligence, a fraud-mitigation company.

Corporate records list him as a director of Amax, which shares office space with Mr. McKay's law firm.

A handful of lawyers work at the firm, which is located in a tower on a strip of high-end retail property across from the Royal Ontario Museum on Bloor Street West. Several police officers — some in uniform and some in plain clothes — arrived at the office at the start of the business day Friday, neighbouring tenants said.

Corporate registration documents for Leximco and First Response list a Klara Kozak as an administrator or partner. Her LinkedIn profile says she has been agency owner since May 2014. Reached by phone this week, Ms. Kozak said she was busy with a booking for a client and unable to answer questions about any connection between the agency and the OPP Association.

Two large dogs greeted visitors Wednesday at Leximco's storefront office on Bloor St. West near Islington Ave., where Ms. Kozak declined to answer questions about any police searches, the company's links to the OPPA or Mr. McKay.

"We have no comment," Ms. Kozak said, asking a Post reporter to leave.

When asked if someone needed to be a police officer or emergency services worker to book travel through the company, she said no.

Visitors to the First Response website are greeted by an image of a tropical resort and this message: "You Deserve a Holiday. Your job is to make everyone else feel safe and secure. Trust your travel decisions with a team that understands, you need the same." Its website says first responders in Ontario, including the Ontario Provincial Police, Toronto Police Service, Toronto Fire Service and paramedics in Grey County "call us to enjoy preferred travel arrangements."

Sgt. Peter Leon, a spokesman for the OPP, and OPP Deputy Commissioner Scott Tod said this week they had never heard of the agency. Meaghan Gray, a spokeswoman for the Toronto Police, said she had never heard of the agency either.

The First Response Twitter page shows it has issued one tweet, has three followers and is following 22 people. One of them is Jim Christie.

Mr. Christie took a voluntary leave of absence as the president of the OPP Association on Monday in the wake of the police searches at the association's headquarters in Barrie.

Martin Bain, the association's vice-president, also voluntarily stepped aside, and the board of directors placed Karl Walsh, the chief administrative officer, on administrative leave.

The association, which represents 9,000 employees, said in a statement that these actions should not be considered admissions of wrongdoing.

Josh Jutras, spokesman for the association, would not answer questions this week about any relationship between the association and the travel agency.

(National Post)



HALIFAX - Nova Scotia's Serious Incident Response Team says the injuries sustained by a man who ran into a tree stump during an arrest last fall were not the fault of an RCMP officer.

In a report released today, the police watchdog says RCMP responded to a 911 call on Oct. 10 reporting a possible impaired driver who had threatened a man with a gun.

A police officer later followed a pickup truck into the driveway of a home in Lower East Chezzetcook, where the 23-year-old suspect jumped out and tried to flee.

The report says the officer yelled at the man to stop, but he continued to head into woods behind the home where he ran into an uprooted tree stump hitting his face.

The man was knocked unconscious and medical tests conducted the next day determined he fractured the orbital bone near his left eye.

Investigators say the arrest attempt was justified and there are no grounds to consider charges against the officer because the suspect's injuries were the result of his decision to run into the woods.

OTTAWA - Justice Minister Peter McKay says new legislation will ensure Canada's most violent and repeat offenders will stay behind bars until they die with no hope of parole.



The proposed bill was announced by Prime Minister Stephen Harper last week.

It would apply to those convicted of killing police or correctional officers, terrorism, kidnapping or sexual assault and crimes "of a particularly brutal nature."

McKay says after 35 years, prisoners would be able to appeal to the public safety minister for release, but he says it would be under "very narrow" circumstances.

Currently, prisoners serving a life sentence for first-degree murder can apply for parole after 25 years.