

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK *Celebrating 20 Years*

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Executive Digest

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VANCOUVER - The Vancouver Police Department has released a new public database called Geodash, which can be searched by anyone to see active crime hot spots around the city.

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OTTAWA - Canada's privacy watchdog says federal agencies must put more rigorous safeguards in place to protect sensitive personal information - especially when that data is on an easy-to-lose memory stick.

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RCMP closer to collective bargaining rights



Dec 07 2015

Mounties will soon be one step closer to having the right to collective bargaining.

The RCMP is the only police service in Canada without that right or the freedom to unionize.

But today, Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale told the House of Commons the government is preparing to set out a new labour relations regime for the force in response to a decision by the Supreme Court that calls the current rules unconstitutional.

In January, the top court said Mounties should have the right to unionize and collectively bargain and gave the government one year to come up with new rules.

The government won't meet that deadline and is expected to ask for an extension.

The proposed legislation, which Goodale said should be tabled by the end of February, would allow RCMP members and reservists to choose whether they want to be represented by a bargaining agent that is independent from RCMP management. Deadlocks in bargaining would be put to binding arbitration



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and officers would have no right to strike.

Commissioned officers, the Mounties' senior managers, would not be represented by the new regime and the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board would handle all grievances about the collective agreement.

Right now, the national police force has a non-unionized labour relations scheme called the Staff Relations Representative Program, which is financed by the RCMP. Two elected members on the national executive bring concerns about the workplace directly to RCMP brass but don't talk about wages.

In the summer, the Treasury Board launched consultations with thousands of RCMP staff to get their views on how to move forward in light of the Supreme Court decision. In a report made public today, it found that "for every member who thinks that unionization represents the end of the RCMP, there are two or three others who think that the organization cannot survive without it."

Many members also said they want to see a governance regime that would "free the RCMP from Treasury Board." David Brown made that recommendation in his 2007 report, Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP, but it has never been implemented.

Laura Young is the Toronto lawyer who represented the Mounted Police Association of Ontario and Mounted Police Professional Association based in British Columbia at the Supreme Court. To this day, RCMP brass have not formally recognized the two groups, which launched the constitutional challenge.

Young said her clients will be pleased that the bill would include binding arbitration. As for the delay, Young added she wasn't surprised the new government needs more time.

This year's Supreme Court decision reversed a decision it made 15 years ago. This time, the court said the current Staff Relations Representative Program "is simply an

internal human relations scheme imposed on RCMP members by management. The element of employee choice is almost entirely missing and the structure has no independence from management."

The top court added, "The RCMP is the only police force in Canada without a collective agreement to regulate the working conditions of its officers. It has not been shown how or why the RCMP is materially different from the police forces that have the benefit of collective bargaining regimes that provide basic bargaining protections."

In its ruling the Supreme Court doesn't specifically say that Mounties should unionize, just that members should choose their labour relations system and it must be independent. (CBC News)



Dec 03 2015

OTTAWA - The constitutional challenge of a Conservative law that retroactively cleared the RCMP for destroying gun registry data has been put on hold while the new Liberal government reassesses its options.

The attorney general of Canada requested a three-month delay in the case, according to the office of federal information commissioner Suzanne Legault, in order to "consider its position in these proceedings."

Legault and the individual involved in the case, Bill Clennett, agreed to the postponement.

At issue is a highly controversial move by the former Conservative government last spring to retroactively rewrite the access-to-information law after Legault found the Mounties wilfully breached the rules in handling a request for gun registry data in 2012.

The Harper government reacted to Legault's special report to Parliament by creating a backdated loophole that they buried in an omnibus budget bill, effectively turning back the clock to October 2011 in order to rewrite the law and clear the RCMP of wrongdoing.

In a special report to Parliament last May, the information commissioner called the Conservative move a "perilous precedent" that could be used by future governments to retroactively rewrite laws on everything from spending scandals to electoral fraud.

Dec 03 2015

KAMLOOPS, B.C. - The RCMP detachment in Kamloops, B.C., has celebrated a milestone in the recovery of one its own a year after the officer was shot during a traffic stop.

Cpl. Jean-Rene Michaud's colleagues held a small ceremony for him and announced he is recovering well after countless surgeries, complications and setbacks.

RCMP Supt. Brad Mueller says Michaud is in good spirits as he considers returning to work in the new year.

Michaud was wearing body armor when he was shot multiple times and critically wounded last Dec. 3, sparking a manhunt for a suspect.

Accused shooter Kenneth Knutson's preliminary hearing on numerous charges including attempted murder is expected to start next week.

Michaud was transferred to Vancouver for treatment before returning to a Kamloops hospital months after he was shot. (CFJC)

Dec 03 2015

EDMONTON - A wild and dangerous chase though Edmonton stretched police resources to the limit and left two people facing a long list of serious charges.

Police spokesman Scott Pattison says it started with a simple shoplifting call in the wee hours of Thursday morning, but led to a stolen pickup truck colliding with a police cruiser.

He says the incident "quickly escalated to a criminal flight response" and a string of crimes that stretched from the city's core to the bedroom community of Sherwood Park.

He says a male and female suspect were spotted by a police helicopter abandoning the truck and then trying to break into three different homes.

Pattison says at the first home, the suspects pulled a gun and tried to kick in the door, but the homeowner was able to keep them out.

At the next place, the suspects were chased out of the backyard by the owner while they attempted to break into a garage, and at the third one, where the homeowner was sleeping, they were able to steal a car. (CHED)

Dec 03 2015

EDMONTON - An Edmonton police officer has been fired after being convicted of two charges of deceit under the Police Act.

"Honesty is the lubricant which keeps the policing machine functioning properly," presiding officer Supt. Thomas Grue wrote in a decision that concluded Const. Elvin Toy had to be dismissed as penalty for the deceit.

Grue said anything less than dismissal would "significantly damage the trust and confidence in the Edmonton Police Service," both by the public and within the justice system.

"(T) he effectiveness and efficiency of a police service is largely dependent upon the confidence that can be placed in its officers to tell the truth when it counts most," he wrote.

The decision, dated Thursday, was released to reporters by Edmonton defence lawyer Tom Engel, who filed the complaint against Toy after the officer looked at Engel's notes during a hearing before the Law Enforcement Review Board in December 2009.

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"I was, frankly, very happy to see the decision. It's been a long time coming," Engel said.

Toy was one of several Edmonton police officers who came under investigation a decade ago, when their squad was accused of harassment and intimidation of other officers - including wearing "No rats" T-shirts to a baseball game in June 2005.

It was during a disciplinary hearing around that issue when Toy was spotted staring at Engel's notes during a break in the proceedings. Engel filed a complaint, which launched an internal investigation under the Police Act.

Toy denied looking at or reading Engel's notes, first in a written statement, and then again testifying at a disciplinary hearing in 2012.

He was ultimately found guilty of discreditable conduct for looking at the notes, then charged and convicted of deceit for lying about it.

He was suspended for 50 hours on the discreditable conduct charge, but Chief Rod Knecht called for Toy's dismissal for the deceit. Toy's lawyer had argued dismissal was too harsh a penalty.

(Edmonton Journal)

Dec 03 2015

INGONISH - After two years of planning and 14 months of construction, the new RCMP Ingonish detachment officially opened Thursday, replacing the oldest RCMP detachment in Atlantic Canada.

The project is unique, given that employees of the RCMP led the design and construction phases. It is the first design of its type in Canada, and will serve as a template for three new RCMP detachments in Newfoundland and Labrador in the near future.

"As your provincial police, the Nova Scotia RCMP is pleased to officially open the new Ingonish Detachment," said A/Commr. Brennan, in a press release. "The completion of this new facility is a concrete example of how the RCMP is significantly investing and modernizing its services in the communities we serve across Nova Scotia."

Features of the new building include a state-of-the-art thermal design, automated lighting and plumbing fixtures, and a flexible design concept that will allow for future additions and renovations. The detachment also features a fully functional cell pavilion with secure cells, a breath-testing and fingerprinting area, and a secure bay for prisoner transfers.

Principle design was completed by DSRA Architecture in association with KMBR Architects Planners Inc., and construction was done by Joneljim Concrete Construction (1994) Limited.

The new RCMP Ingonish Detachment will continue to serve the approximately 5,000 permanent residents of Ingonish and surrounding areas, as well as the roughly 400,000 annual visitors to the Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

(Cape Breton Post)

FRIDAY
DECEMBER 4, 2015

Dec 04 2015

The photo of a First Nation police officer saluting a funeral procession in northern Ontario is drawing praise and being shared hundreds of times on Facebook.



On Tuesday, Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service posted a photo on their Facebook page which shows Constable Troy George on the roadside in Bearskin Lake, Ont., saluting a passing funeral procession.

The photo now has over 5,000 'likes' and nearly 300 comments, many from people praising the constable's actions.

The Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service has detachments in 35 First Nation communities across northern Ontario, including Bearskin Lake where Constable Troy George is posted.

(CBC News)

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BOYLE, Alta. - If you're trying to track down your drug dealer, it's probably a good idea to make sure you haven't phoned a police officer by mistake.

An RCMP officer in Boyle, Alta., recently received several unsolicited calls to his personal cell phone from a person looking to purchase narcotics.

The first time, the officer informed the caller they had dialled the wrong number and hung up.

But when the person kept calling back, the officer finally asked who the caller was looking for.

The caller gave him the name of a person of interest in an ongoing drug investigation into street-level drug trafficking.

The information inadvertently provided to police was used to obtain a search warrant on an apartment in Athabasca, Alta., where illegal drugs were found by police.

"Police work doesn't get much easier than this," said Sgt. Kevin McGillivray, commander of the Boyle RCMP detachment.

Trevor Dennis, 41, of Athabasca, was charged Friday with possession of marijuana for the purpose of trafficking and possession of cocaine.

He was released on bail to appear in provincial court Dec. 14.

Dec 04 2015

WINNIPEG - About 26 per cent of missing person cases in Winnipeg this fall came from just 30 people who repeatedly disappeared, and 66 per cent of cases were reported by group homes, a new police report states.

The Winnipeg Police Service's latest report on the safety and protection of indigenous women and girls says 2,488 missing persons cases involving 732 people were reported in the third quarter of 2015.

The report said during that period, 30 people had 15 or more missing persons reports, accounting for 26 per cent of all cases in the quarter.

About 71 per cent of missing persons reports were habitual or chronic cases, 70 per cent were female, and 85 per cent were reported by CFS facilities. About 66 per cent of reports came from group homes.

Citywide, the top 36 addresses - which had 15 or more missing person incidents - were CFS facilities, the report says.

In September, the police service said about four out of five missing person reports it receives every month involve children and youth in CFS care.

Deputy chief Danny Smyth told members of the Winnipeg Police Board on Friday that there are 10,000 children and youth in care, so it's a "big issue for society to deal with."

He added that 40 per cent of children in care are indigenous, and he sees potential solutions such as the Manitoba government's proposal to give indigenous communities more say in child welfare.

"I think it may well prevent them from being placed in a group home altogether, be-

cause they would be staying with members of their own community or extended family," Smyth said.

"A lot of the numbers that you're seeing are kids cutting and running from a group home, even if it's for a short period and then returning."

Smyth said police are now sharing overnight reports with staff at CFS facilities to help track down missing children and youth quickly. (CBC News)

Dec 04 2015

CHICAGO - The number of U.S. police officers charged with murder or manslaughter for on-duty shootings has tripled this year, a sharp increase that at least one expert says could be the result of more video evidence.

In the past, the annual average was fewer than five officers charged. In the final weeks of 2015, that number has climbed to 15, with 10 of the cases involving videos.

"If you take the cases with the video away, you are left with what we would expect to see over the past 10 years - about five cases," said Philip Stinson, the Bowling Green State University criminologist who compiled the statistics from across the nation. "You have to wonder if there would have been charges if there wasn't video evidence."

The importance of video was highlighted last week with the release of footage showing a Chicago officer fatally shooting a teenager 16 times. The officer said he feared for his life from the teen, who was suspected of damaging cars using a small knife. He also had a powerful hallucinogen in his bloodstream.

"This had all the trappings of a life-threatening situation for a law-enforcement officer - PCP-laced juvenile who had been wreaking havoc on cars with a knife," said Joseph Tacopina, a prominent New York defence attorney and former prosecutor who has represented several police officers. "Except you have the video that shows a straight-out execution."

When he was charged with first-degree murder last week, officer Jason Van Dyke became the 15th officer in the country to face such charges in 2015.

Over the last decade, law-enforcement agencies have recorded roughly 1,000 fatal shootings each year by on-duty police. An average of fewer than five each year resulted in murder or manslaughter charges against officers, Stinson found.

Of the 47 officers charged from the beginning of 2005 through the end of last year, about 23 per cent were convicted, Stinson found.

Just how dramatically a video can shift the balance of power was apparent in North Charleston, South Carolina, when officer Michael Slager shot and killed Walter Scott, an unarmed black man as he ran away after a traffic stop.

Slager told investigators that Scott had tried to grab his gun and Taser. But after a video from a cellphone showed Slager taking careful aim at Scott as he ran away and then picking up his Taser and dropping it

near Scott's body, Slager was charged with murder.

"If not for the recording, I have no doubt that the officer in the Walter Scott case would be out on patrol today," Harris said.

Videos have also played a key role in cases in which the victims were, in fact, armed - something that Tacopina said typically brings to a halt any thought of charging officers (AP)

SATURDAY

DECEMBER 5, 2015

Dec 05 2015

A new invention may soon make it easier for police who pull over risky drivers to test them for marijuana impairment on the spot, in addition to the usual alcohol breath test.

A marijuana breathalyzer will begin clinical trials early next year, the Oakland, California-based Hound Labs Inc. announced this week.

"The idea is that law enforcement will have one device out on the road to test for both THC [a marijuana component] and alcohol," said Hound Labs CEO and founder Dr. Mike Lynn, an emergency room physician at Highland Hospital, in Oakland.

Typically, measuring the level of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) -- the psychoactive component in cannabis that gives users a "high" -- is done using urine, blood, or saliva tests. The results can show if marijuana has been used in recent days or weeks, but they are not a very accurate way to measure real-time impairment, said Lynn.

Hound Labs has been collaborating with scientists at UC Berkeley to develop the technology.

"The UC Berkeley scientists are a really good group, including the chair of bioengineering and the associate dean of the college of chemistry. It's a complicated scientific challenge," Lynn told CBS News.

The handheld device will be tested for roadside use by law enforcement agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area and then Lynn hopes it will eventually be used across the country.

"We plan to do clinical studies and also work with law enforcement on testing to make sure we have the exact device that's really needed out there on street," he said.

The AP reported in July that researchers from Washington State University also have a portable marijuana breathalyzer in the works.

Under that state's Initiative 502, which voters approved to legalize recreational marijuana use in 2012, drivers are considered impaired if they test positive for at least 5 nanograms of THC per milliliter of blood.

But Lynn, who is also a reserve deputy sheriff for Alameda County, California, said standards for marijuana impairment out there right now are sketchy. He hopes the availability of breathalyzers will shift the

national dialogue from one focused on detecting if THC is in the body to a discussion about creating standards that reflect actual impairment.

Sales of Hound Labs' devices to police and consumers could begin late next year, he said, and could carry a price tag of \$1,000 or less.

About 20 million Americans use marijuana, and as more states legalize it, some studies have found it's becoming more common for young people to drive stoned than drive drunk.

"From a trauma center perspective, I have seen the terrible, senseless tragedies related to impaired driving," Lynn said. He's seen it from a law enforcement perspective, too, and knows the challenges police officers face when dealing with impaired drivers.

"When I started the company, it was my intention of finding a way to measure this stuff in breath. Every single death or injury from an impaired driver is preventable and there aren't many things in life like that that are preventable," he said.

(CBS News)

SUNDAY
DECEMBER 6, 2015

Dec 06 2015

VICTORIA - Victoria's police chief says he's ashamed and humiliated by his own actions in exchanging inappropriate messages over social media with the wife of a subordinate officer.

Frank Elsner said Sunday that he was the subject of a recent internal police board investigation involving his conduct, but has emerged with the continued confidence of the board and intends to continue leading the force. He also apologized to his department.

"I'm humiliated beyond words," he told The Vancouver Sun.

He said he's also spoken to the officer whose wife was involved and his family about the incident.

"I'm ashamed of my actions," said Elsner. "I'm better than that. I know better than that. And I think part of this, the learning opportunity, is that you stand up and tell the truth, and learn from it, and move on."

Elsner has led the Victoria force for almost two years. He's married with two daughters, and said his wife is fully aware of what happened.

In September, he said, the civilian police board became aware of an allegation against him.

"An allegation was made against me, that based on direct messages off of Twitter, that I had an inappropriate relationship with a female. The board notified me of that and they hired an independent lawyer to do the investigation. The investigation was completed and last week I was notified.

"They found that there was no inappropriate relationship. However, I should not have engaged in the direct messages in the first place and I fully agree."

The woman is a police officer in a neighbouring department. Her husband works in the Victoria Police Department under Elsner's command.

"When this first broke, he and I spoke and he said he believed that no relationship took place," said Elsner. "There was none."

But it was "the tone" of the conversations that was wrong, he said. "I know it was, because I shut it down. I'm the one that said, 'No we cannot communicate any further.' Months before it came to light."

The board's investigation concluded Friday.

B.C.'s Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner confirmed it received an internal investigation report from the Victoria police board.

Commissioner Stan Lowe, the civilian that oversees police conduct issues, will review the report and has the power to order his own investigation if he identifies issues that are matters of public trust, said deputy commissioner Rollie Woods.

Elsner was facing growing discontent from the rank and file of the department over the weekend, as rumours circulated about his conduct with an officer's wife.

He apologized to staff in an email Sunday, asking to move forward "together as a department."

"I learned many things during this investigation about how I will conduct myself in the future," he wrote. "I have also learned how much of a toll these lengthy, process-driven investigations take on all the people

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affected by them. As your Chief, I pledge to make the changes necessary in our process to be far more humane in our approach.”

(Vancouver Sun)

MONDAY DECEMBER 7, 2015

Dec 07 2015

EDMONTON - RCMP say a search of a property where officers shot a suspect wanted in a triple homicide west of Edmonton found more than 30 firearms, some of them loaded.

Mounties say officers also found illegal rifle ammunition magazines, bullets, body armour and stolen property.

Mickell Bailey, who is 19, has been charged with two counts of first-degree murder and one count of second-degree murder in last week's deaths.

Police say further charges are pending.

The victims have been identified as Daniel Miller, 46, Roxanne Berube, 36, and her 16-year-old daughter, Jazmine Lyon.

Bailey, who was treated in hospital for a gunshot wound, is to appear in Edson provincial court on Dec. 15.

Dec 07 2015

NANAIMO, B.C. - A Vancouver Island Mountie who pleaded guilty to assault causing bodily harm has received a conditional discharge and one year probation.

Const. Tim Bedard admitted he punched an inmate at the Nanaimo detachment after the man refused to remove his shorts while being booked into a cell and struck the officer.

Bedard hit the man eight times, leaving him with a broken nose, a possible fractured cheekbone and a black eye.

RCMP Supt. Mark Fisher says he respects the decision, though it's unclear when Bedard will return to front-line duties.

Court heard the officer has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, and the sentence means he will not have a criminal record.

Bedard must also complete 50 hours of community service within the first six months of his probation.

(CKAY)

Dec 07 2015

TORONTO - The Ontario legislature has passed a private member's bill aimed at combating abuse of the pain killer fentanyl, which is blamed for at least 655 deaths in Canada in the past six years.

The bill from North Bay Progressive Conservative Vic Fedeli, which passed final reading with support from all three parties, incorporates the so-called patch-for-patch program which is already operating in 45 Ontario communities.

People with a prescription for fentanyl would only be given new patches with the drug when they turn in old, used patches.

Fedeli says his bill can save lives, noting it's been more than a year since the last fentanyl death in North Bay, which averaged two such deaths a year since 2007.

The policy was developed by the North Bay drug strategy committee, which worked with police, doctors and pharmacists to come up with the "Patch4Patch" program.

The number of fentanyl-related deaths in Ontario jumped from 63 in 2009 to 111 in 2013, with 466 deaths during those five years.

The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse says police seizures of fentanyl, both diverted prescriptions and illicitly produced, increased over 30 times from 29 in 2009 to 894 in 2014.

Dec 07 2015

SURREY, B.C. - RCMP in Surrey, B.C., are taking the lead in a new intervention plan touted elsewhere in Canada for reducing child protection cases, violent crimes and emergency-room admissions.

Police say the approach involves a weekly meeting of officers and professionals from corrections, housing, health, social services, income assistance and education.

The meeting would allow members to review cases where a referring agency believes there is a high probability of immediate harm for an individual or family.

If the group determines a situation involves elevated risk, the appropriate agencies would intervene within 24 to 48 hours.

The plan is modelled after one that originated in Prince Albert, Sask., and has been used in other communities in Canada and the United States over the past four years.

RCMP say nearly two thirds of their calls last year involved issues such as poverty, substance abuse and homelessness and that police can't fix those problems by simply arresting people.

Dec 07 2015

A Florida woman was reportedly arrested and placed into custody last week, after her car implicated her in at least one alleged hit-and-run incident.

You read that right.

According to reports from Chicago's ABC7 and ABC25 in West Palm Beach, Fla., a car driven by 57-year-old Cathy Bernstein automatically called 911 to report a crash. The call was part of a safety feature designed to help first responders locate people who may have lost consciousness in crashes. That seems to have given dispatchers all the information they needed to pinpoint the location of the vehicle - and find the alleged hit-and-run driver - without ever having to talk to a person. In fact, talking to a person didn't help at all: in an audio of a 911 call obtained by the Florida station, Bernstein denied to a skeptical dispatcher that there even been any accident at all.

The report said the car that rattled on its owner was a Ford; Police in Port St. Lucie, Fla., did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

quest for comment.

Alan Hall, a spokesman for Ford, said that the company hadn't heard of 911 Assist being used like this before. But, he said, from reports he'd heard about the Florida incident, it seems that the emergency call feature "worked exactly like it was supposed to." The vehicle was in a collision, and called 911 through the driver's phone, which was paired with the car. When the driver did not respond to the operator, the car appears to have taken over and provided the operator with the information needed to locate the vehicle. That could have been a life-saver if the driver was unresponsive after passing out behind the wheel.

Hall said at least 10 million Ford vehicles with 911 Assist capability are on the road. However, drivers should note that the feature is opt-in - meaning that all drivers, including the one allegedly involved in this crash, have to turn the feature on and pair their car with their phones before it will work.

(Washington Post)

TUESDAY DECEMBER 8, 2015

Dec 08 2015

HALIFAX - Nova Scotia's transportation minister is defending a change that boosts the province's jaywalking fine to nearly \$700.

Geoff MacLellan says raising the pedestrian fine to a level equivalent with the highest fine for drivers sends the message that road safety is a shared responsibility.

But MacLellan says the legislative changes have to be part of a broader effort to better educate the public about road safety and to examine such things as road engineering in urban corridors where there is heavy pedestrian traffic.

MacLellan says the intent is not to target pedestrians.

Tristan Cleveland of the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax calls the fine "disproportionate and counterproductive."

Cleveland says there is little evidence that an increase in fines is an effective strategy when it comes to deterring people from jaywalking.

Vehicle-pedestrian accidents are an ongoing problem in Nova Scotia, and Halifax in particular.

Official figures show police had responded to 153 such collisions in the city by the end of October, down from 184 in the same period the year before.

Dec 08 2015

COLWOOD, BC - They left the pub in separate vehicles but were reunited a short time later - by police.

It started when an officer from the Capital Regional District Integrated Road Safety Unit spotted a vehicle leaving a pub and being driven erratically.

After pulling the vehicle over, the officer

noticed a strong odour of alcohol coming from the driver. She failed a roadside breath screening test, leading to a 90-day driving prohibition and 30-day impoundment of her vehicle.

Meanwhile, her husband happened to be driving by after leaving the pub a short time later, and noticed his wife had been stopped by police. He decided to pull over and check on her. The officer who spoke to him noticed a strong odour of alcohol on him, too.

The husband was asked to provide breath samples and ended up with a three-day immediate roadside suspension and a three-day vehicle impoundment.

The couple's home was just a short distance away, police said.

It was an interesting start to the annual provincial winter Counterattack blitz, which runs through Jan. 1.

Victoria police and West Shore RCMP were out in full force last Friday as part of the campaign and checked 2,300 drivers, with three drivers being given 90-day immediate roadside prohibitions for driving while impaired.

(Victoria Times Colonist)

Dec 08 2015

REGINA - After nearly two hours of debate, Regina city council passed the police budget for 2016 - a spending plan that adds high-powered carbine guns and eight more front-line police officers.

Councillors approved the proposed 5.3 per cent increase in operating funding.

The recommendation passed 9-1.

The Police Service net operating budget is just over \$71.5 million. Regina police Chief Troy Hagen said the money is needed considering a greater area of responsibility.

"Our police-to-population ratio right now - even with this increase - does not keep up with the growth in the past five years," Hagen said. "So we are actually doing more with less today even with this increase."

This year's budget will result in the addition of eight patrol constables and two civilian positions - business systems analyst and programmer analyst.

Hagen said Saskatchewan is one of the last provinces in Canada to adopt the more modern long-barrelled weapons.

"It's a safer weapon. [It] affords more accuracy. And those weapons, quite frankly, we always hope our officers never have to use their weaponry," Hagen said. "But we know the world that we live in today. We've seen, unfortunately, some very horrific acts of shooter incidents in Canada. More prevalent in the United States, but certainly we've had some in Canada."

(CBC News)

Dec 08 2015

EDMONTON - An agency that investigates police says it is looking into the death of a man in Edmonton after he was shocked with a Taser.

The Alberta Serious Incident Response

Team says officers were called to the home of the 49-year-old on Monday night.

It says the man was agitated and armed with a knife.

Police fired the Taser and, after a struggle, he was taken into custody.

The man went into medical distress while still in the home and officers performed first aid until an ambulance arrived.

He was pronounced dead in hospital.

An autopsy is to be conducted to determine the cause of death.

"ASIRT's investigation will focus on the circumstances surrounding the police contact with the deceased to determine whether police conduct caused the man's death and, if so, whether that conduct constitutes a criminal of-

fence," said a statement from the agency.

"ASIRT's investigation is in its very early stages and, as such, there will be no further comment until the investigation has been completed."

Dec 08 2015

WOODSTOCK, N.B. - The commanding officer of the RCMP in New Brunswick says the force is shocked and disheartened that four of its members from the Woodstock area have been suspended while they are investigated for allegations of discreditable conduct.

Assistant Commissioner Roger Brown says he can't get into specifics of the allegations while they are under investigation, but

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when questioned by reporters he did say they are not drug related.

The Mounties say they're acting on information that resulted in three suspensions in early November.

A fourth member from the area was suspended Tuesday.

In addition to the investigation under the RCMP's code of conduct, the Mounties' major crime unit will determine whether there is any criminality related to the allegations.

The RCMP says the Kennebecasis Regional Police Force is providing independent oversight of the investigation.

All four members of the RCMP have been suspended with pay but Brown says he is pursuing suspension without pay in two of the cases.

Brown says it's significant to have four members suspended from a detachment of 20 officers.

"The conduct of members of the RCMP is rightfully held to a higher standard," Brown said. "These suspensions are troubling but I can assure the public we are taking these matters very seriously."

Dec 08 2015

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - Ontario's Special Investigations Unit has cleared a Peterborough police officer in the death of a 23-year-old man earlier this year.

The man died on April 4 after being shot once in the head by police.

The SIU says the officer involved was justified in using lethal force to protect himself or others.

The investigation found the man had threatened people in the area with a knife shortly before the shooting and had stabbed the officer in the thigh seconds before the gun was fired.

The unit says no charges will be laid against the officer.

Dec 08 2015

ST. JACOBS - The head of Ontario's police chiefs says police want to know how new legislation on street checks will be implemented and how officers will be trained.

Street checks is one of the issues on the agenda as the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police brings 25 police leaders from across the province together in St. Jacobs for a two-day closed meeting.

The new street-check legislation bans arbitrary and random police checks and places new limits on how and when an officer can stop and question a member of the public. The rules would oblige police to inform people they stop that they do not have to answer questions and can walk away.

Association head Niagara Police Chief Jeff McGuire acknowledges using street checks was a controversial policing tool and created challenges, but there is a concern that "the swing of the pendulum" has gone the other way.

"Who will educate the public?" said McGuire.

"They (the public) think police have no legal authority to talk to anybody and many times they are wrong. We have the full authority to stop and speak with them," he said.

"It can lead to arrests that don't need to happen."

The quarterly meetings of the association bring together chiefs, including the OPP and the RCMP, to talk about emerging issues such as body cameras and suspension without pay for officers charged with serious offences.

(Waterloo Region Record)

Dec 08 2015

VANCOUVER - The Vancouver Police Department has released a new public database called Geodash, which can be searched by anyone to see active crime hot spots around the city.

VPD Chief Adam Palmer said Geodash - geodash.vpd.ca - is the same system officers have used in their vehicles for about a year, minus private information and details of suspects and evidence in a criminal case.

"It has been assisting front-line officers in identifying crime trends as they patrol through the streets of Vancouver," he said Tuesday before Special Const. Ryan Prox demonstrated the system for the media.

Palmer said the "interactive crime-mapping tool" is being used in other cities across Canada.

"It is a vetted version of the model our patrol officers use every day on the streets of Vancouver and it is intended to enhance community awareness and provide an open and transparent look at criminal activity in Vancouver," Palmer said.

"We realized the information we were providing to the public was a little behind the times."

Previously, the VPD has provided Excel spreadsheets containing stats on crimes to the public, he said.

"This will give people better general awareness of not only what is happening in the city of Vancouver, but also in their specific neighbourhoods," Palmer said.

"While we want to make every effort to be open and transparent about our crime data and what's happening in the city, it was extremely important when we developed this crime-mapping tool that we wanted to look after people's privacy."

That means no specific addresses of crimes are included, but rather the block where an incident occurred.

And robberies, assaults, sexual assaults and domestic complaints are captured in one category called "offences against a person."

The data is updated daily so residents, as well as officers, can see trends across the city.

(Vancouver Sun)

Dec 08 2015

WASHINGTON - The FBI's system for tracking fatal police shootings is a "travesty," and the agency will replace it by 2017, dramatically expanding the information it gathers on violent police encounters in the United States, a

senior FBI official said Tuesday.

The new effort will go beyond tracking fatal shootings and, for the first time, track any incident in which an officer causes serious injury or death to civilians, including through the use of stun guns, pepper spray and even fists and feet.

"We are responding to a real human outcry," said Stephen L. Morris, assistant director of the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division, which oversees the data collection. "People want to know what police are doing, and they want to know why they are using force. It always fell to the bottom before. It is now the highest priority."

The FBI's efforts follow a year of national focus on fatalities and injuries at the hands of police, with widespread frustration over the lack of reliable data on the incidents.

Morris said the data will also be "much more granular" than in the past and will probably include the gender and race of officers and suspects involved in these encounters, the level of threat or danger the officer faced, and the types of weapons wielded by either party.

The data also will be collected and shared with the public in "near real-time," as the incidents occur, Morris said, instead of being tallied in aggregate at the end of each year.

Getting reliable data on fatal police encounters in the United States is notoriously difficult. The FBI has struggled to gather the most basic data, relying on local police departments to voluntarily share information about officer-involved shootings. Since 2011, less than 3 percent of the nation's 18,000 state and local police agencies have done so.

(Washington Post)

Dec 08 2015

EDMONTON - Edmonton's chief of police has been ordered to reconsider the dismissal of allegations in the Taser and arrest of a mentally ill man in 2011.

In a decision released Monday, the Alberta Law Enforcement Review Board (LERB) concluded that then acting police chief Brian Simpson's decision not to send the case to a disciplinary hearing was "unreasonable."

As a result, the matter is being sent back to Chief Rod Knecht.

The allegations stems from the arrest of a man by two officers witnessed by an Edmonton criminal defence lawyer and his daughter.

On Dec. 23, 2011, Tom Engel and Kate Engel exited a store and saw two police officers talking to a man across the street.

They allege they saw the police search the man without reading him his rights, swear at him and then Taser him.

Tom Engel wrote in his witness statement that he did not see the man resist physically or act aggressively, and heard him cry out in agony only after he was Tasered.

Engel complained, alleging unlawful or excessive use of authority, neglect of duty and discreditable conduct on the part of the officers.

Simpson decided not to go ahead with

a disciplinary hearing since he said the man threatened the officers with a broken glass bottle. Neither of the Engels witnessed that.

The LERB decision upheld Engel's appeal, stating that the acting chief had overstepped his "screening authority." The board found that in his decision, Simpson preferred the evidence of the two officers that made the arrest, and made conclusions that the officers had acted appropriately. The LERB determined that these conclusions go beyond deciding if there is enough evidence for a reasonable, properly instructed person to convict an officer.

The LERB decision cited the Alberta Court of Appeal's description of what a chief's role is in such cases: "The chief may, in performing this role, engage in a limited weighing of evidence, but must not stray beyond the screening function and dispose of the complainant's merits without a hearing." (Edmonton Journal)

Dec 08 2015

OTTAWA - The federal Liberal government is kicking off what it calls the first phase of its inquiry into the tragic phenomenon of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould says the government will consult the families of victims over the next two months to get their input into how the inquiry should be designed and what it needs to accomplish.

Wilson-Raybould was joined for the announcement by Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu.

She says while no inquiry can undo what has happened, it will help find a way forward because Canada "can and must do better."

Bennett says the consultations, which will include a website to allow Canadians to provide input and learn more about the process, will help to determine the terms of reference for the inquiry.

**WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 9, 2015**

Dec 09 2015

OAKVILLE, Ont. - Police in Halton Region say teams specially trained to deal with calls believed to involve mental health issues and crisis intervention have seen action 13 times in their first two days of operation.

Halton regional police partnered with St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton to develop a pilot project of four Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Teams that began patrols on Monday.

Sgt. Mark Dientsmann says the teams were called in six times on Monday and seven times on Tuesday.

The force says teams consisting of a registered health-care professional coupled with a specially trained uniformed officer join the regular platoon shifts each day, and are specifically available to respond to calls involv-

ing people in crisis.

The four officers selected as part of the one-year project have a background in mental health response and have experience working with the Halton force's crisis outreach and support team.

The mental health workers are two registered nurses and two social workers with extensive previous mental health experience.

The four teams are currently receiving further crisis intervention training with a focus on risk assessment, and will be trained to know when to intervene, as well as how to de-escalate and how to control a situation.

The teams will be trained to defuse or de-escalate crisis situations, advocate for the person and families in crisis, ensure mental health assessments are completed and will be equipped to provide resources, help and support for everyone involved.

The teams will work seven days a week and will be dispatched to mental health calls throughout Halton Region.

"Front line officers are responding to mental health crisis calls on an increasing basis," deputy chief Nishan Duraiappah said Wednesday in a release.

"Partnering with health-care professionals is a progressive approach to providing timely and quality service to those struggling with mental health," Duraiappah said.

Dec 09 2015

VICTORIA - The union representing police officers in Victoria says the chief needs to be removed from his post over a breach of trust that affects all members.

Chief Frank Elsner issued a statement earlier this week saying he was sorry and humiliated for exchanging direct messages with a woman on Twitter.

Acting union president Sgt. Glen Shiels said that while the incident itself was on the low end of a breach, the fact that Elsner messaged the wife of a police officer in the department undermines the trust of all his officers.

"When you're contacting the spouse of a member that's a betrayal that most members are going to find hard to forgive," he said Wednesday.

The member's wife is reportedly a police officer in a neighbouring jurisdiction.

The Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board gave its full support for Elsner's leadership after the findings of an investigation by an independent lawyer were presented to the board last week.

But Shiels said the union didn't see the report and didn't know about the investigation until recently, which hampered its ability to support the officer whose wife was involved.

"It's alleged misconduct only on the part of the chief, but the affected member should be made privy to what the scope of the investigation was and what the outcome was," Shiels said.

The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner said Monday that it was review-

ing the lawyer's report and will determine whether to order a further investigation.

However, Shiels said officers with the Victoria Police Department don't believe the investigation process was transparent or thorough enough, adding they want the complaint commissioner to know that the investigation doesn't impact just one or two officers.

"It's our position, the membership's position, that a level of trust needs to exist between the chief and his members. The members need to have trust in the chief and the chief has breached that trust."

Shiels said union members want the commissioner to order an independent investigation, arguing that the B.C. Police Act should apply equally to all members, regardless of rank.

Dec 09 2015

WINNIPEG - The Winnipeg police service has spent \$343,000 on a new armoured tactical vehicle, saying the decision was made in part because of last year's targeted attack on police officers in Moncton, N.B.

Supt. Gord Perrier says the force had opportunities in the past to buy a used one from the armed forces, but didn't because they were concerned about the militarization of police.

He says that changed after last year's deadly shooting rampage in Moncton, where three police officers were killed and two wounded by Justin Bourque, who was 24 at the time.

Bourque is now serving a life sentence with no chance of parole for 75 years.

Winnipeg had been one of the few large cities in Canada without an armoured vehicle, though RCMP in the province do have one of their own.

Perrier says it will be used primarily for rescue missions and transporting personnel in high-risk situations, such as armed standoffs or explosives investigations.

Dec 09 2015

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson told Canada's First Nations leaders that his force includes racist officers and that he wants to kick them out.

Commissioner Paulson was responding to questions about systemic abuse of indigenous people after giving a speech to members of the Assembly of First Nations that promised reconciliation between the force and indigenous communities.

"I understand that there are racists in my police force, I don't want them to be in my police force," Commissioner Paulson said Wednesday afternoon during the AFN's annual three-day meeting in Gatineau, Que.

"I would encourage you all, though, to have confidence in the [discipline] processes that exist, up to and including calling me if you're having a problem with a racist in your jurisdiction or any other problems."

Commissioner Paulson told the members that the review and complaints body that oversees his force was strengthened in

the last Parliament and that RCMP brass can now be “very decisive with respect to handling matters of discipline.”

Grand Chief Doug Kelly, of B.C.’s Sto:lo Tribal Council, had told him: “We encounter racism every single day. Some of the worst racists carry a gun and they carry a badge authorized by you.”

“We need you to confront racism in the ranks,” said Mr. Kelly, as many in the crowd of about 300 AFN members applauded.

For years, Mounties have faced allegations that they have systematically mistreated those in some of the 600 First Nations communities they police across the country. The RCMP’s civilian watchdog recently wrapped up its investigation into allegations of excessive use of force, rape and mishandling of missing-persons reports when dealing with indigenous peoples in Northern British Columbia. B.C. The report will be made public once the RCMP issues its response. Quebec’s provincial police force is also confronting allegations of similar long-standing mistreatment of First Nations people, including accusations that could lead to criminal charges.

(Globe and Mail)

THURSDAY DECEMBER 10, 2015

Dec 10 2015

OTTAWA - Canada’s privacy watchdog says federal agencies must put more rigorous safeguards in place to protect sensitive personal information - especially when that data is on an easy-to-lose memory stick.

In his annual report tabled Thursday, privacy commissioner Daniel Therrien underscored a record-high number of federal government data breaches disclosed to his office.

While many institutions have made strides, there is still much room for improvement - particularly with the use of portable storage devices, Therrien said.

Federal institutions reported 256 data breaches in 2014-2015, up from 228 the year before.

As in previous years, the leading cause of breaches was accidental disclosure, a risk Therrien says can often be lessened by following proper procedures.

Last year marked the first time institutions were required to report data breaches to the privacy commissioner. Previously, reporting was voluntary.

Given that Canadians are required to provide very sensitive information to federal departments and agencies, “the government’s duty of care is paramount,” Therrien said in a statement.

Portable storage devices are convenient because they can hold huge amounts of data and are generally small and highly portable, the commissioner noted. But that’s what also creates significant privacy and security risks.

“These devices can be easily lost, mis-

placed or stolen,” he said. “Without proper controls, federal institutions are running the risk that the personal information of Canadians will be lost or inappropriately accessed.”

Therrien’s office undertook a special audit following concerns over a number of such data breaches, including a 2012 incident in which a portable hard drive containing the personal information of almost 600,000 student loan recipients went astray.

The audit, which examined practices at 17 institutions, identified a number of concerns:

- More than two-thirds of the agencies had not formally assessed the risks surrounding the use of all types of portable storage devices;
- More than 90 per cent did not track all devices throughout their life cycle;
- One-quarter did not enforce the use of encrypted storage devices.

The commissioner says the audited institutions have accepted all of his recommendations.

Dec 10 2015

TORONTO - Toronto police have made an arrest in a 2012 homicide after using social media to advance their investigation.

Mike Pimentel was stabbed to death in the city’s Liberty Village neighbourhood on New Year’s Day in 2012.

About a year after he was killed, a Toron-

to homicide detective began releasing photos and clues related to the case on Twitter, in the hope that it would lead to new information.

The method was a first for the force and was inspired by the popular crime podcast “Serial,” which gradually released information about a real-life U.S. murder.

On Thursday, police announced the arrest of a Calgary man, Shawn Poirier, who has been charged with second-degree murder in Pimentel’s death.

Police said the use of social media was “instrumental” in identifying witnesses and gathering new evidence in the case.

“The social media campaign brought us more information that allowed us to further our investigation to identify the person we believe is responsible,” said acting Supt. Greg McLane, adding that the online campaign was used to “reinvigorate” the police investigation.

As the investigation progressed, police began an “extensive” Twitter campaign, which involved the systematic release of photographs and information in the hopes of attracting the attention of party-goers who were in the area on the morning Pimentel was stabbed.

“The target ground from this campaign was national,” said McLane. “This resulted in a very significant response from the public.”

Poirier was arrested on Dec. 3.



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