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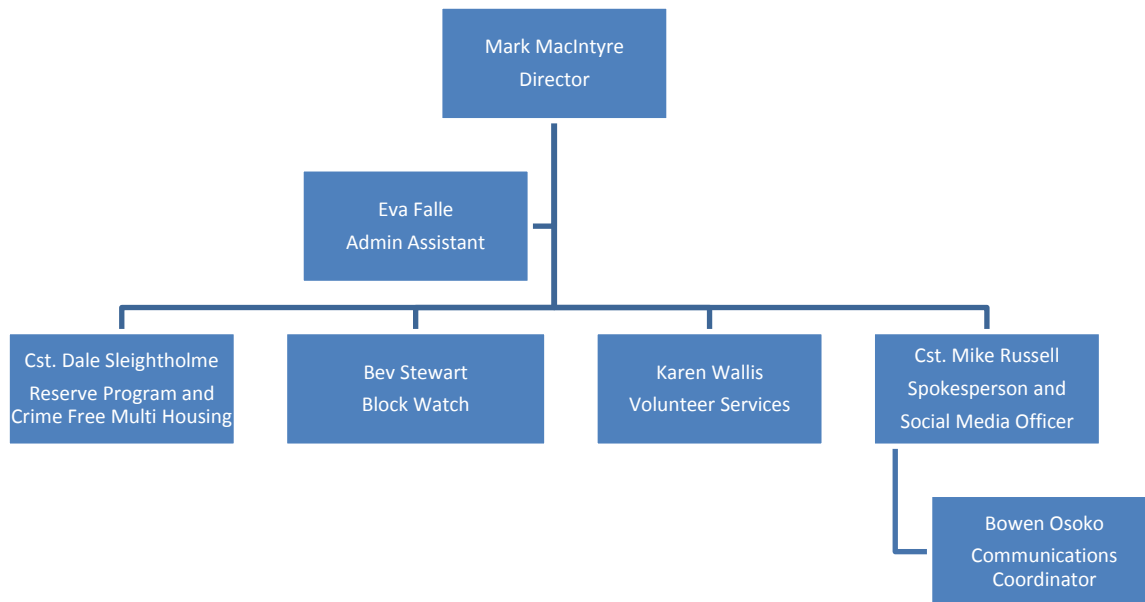


Crime Prevention Services/Public Affairs
2012 Annual Report

Prepared by: Mark MacIntyre, Director, Crime Prevention Services/Public Affairs

Introduction

On July 1st, 2012, the Victoria Police Department combined its Crime Prevention Services with its Public Affairs function, thus putting all community engagement efforts under one director. The amalgamated Crime Prevention Services/Public Affairs (CPS/PA) section is now represented by this structure:



The mission of the CPS/PA section is to prevent crime in Victoria and Esquimalt by engaging the communities that we serve. This is done through an integrated approach to community engagement based on the five main functions of the section, which are:

- 1) Public affairs (media relations, social media, community events, speakers' program, the VicPD.ca website, and internal communications);
- 2) Block Watch;
- 3) Volunteer Services;
- 4) The Reserve Program; and
- 5) The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

All members of the section develop and execute innovative crime prevention initiatives that are closely coordinated for maximum efficiency and to avoid duplication of effort. Moreover, they are supported by multi-media public affairs efforts that are aimed at "getting the word out" about these initiatives across the largest audience possible. This integrated approach, while

new to the department, has already paid dividends in our crime prevention efforts in 2012. The following report outlines those successes by function.

1) Public Affairs *(Cst. Mike Russell, Mike Tucker (Bowen Osoko as of Jan. 14, 2013))*

Media Relations

With the arrival of the Director of Public Affairs in 2011 and the amalgamation of Public Affairs and Crime Prevention Services in 2012, the focus of the Public Affairs section (consisting of the uniformed Media Spokesperson/Social Media Officer and the civilian Communications Coordinator) has shifted to a more concentrated focus on crime prevention. Instead of a reliance on telling our story through responsive media relations, Public Affairs now works to develop crime prevention “packages” based on public safety themes that directly support the department’s operational priorities. These “packages” can consist of a crime prevention demonstration supported by Volunteers and Reserves, a conventional media push with news releases and interviews, a complementary social media plan, and VicPD videos (all generated in-house and at no incremental cost).

One example of this integrated approach was a holiday season “Lock Out Auto Crime” initiative, which consisted of a mobile display, staffed by Volunteers and Reserve Constables, that demonstrated how to properly secure a vehicle during the busy holiday shopping season. Supported by an intense conventional media and social media campaign, this initiative succeeded in connecting with thousands of vehicle owners over the holiday period.

Other selected topics for successful crime prevention initiatives in 2012 included:

- “School Zone Safety” (189 views on YouTube)
- “Spike in Vehicle Break-Ins” (941 views on YouTube)
- “Coffee Shop Safety” (13,165 views on YouTube)
- “Bike To Work Week”
 - “Safety for Drivers” (170 views on YouTube)
 - “Preparing your Bike” (120 views on YouTube)

Of course, in addition to these proactive initiatives, responding to media queries remains a significant responsibility of the Public Affairs staff. On average in 2012, they received between 15 and 50 queries per day from journalists by phone, email, texts and social media at all hours of the day and night, weekdays, weekends, and holidays.

By the numbers....

It total, it is estimated that VicPD Public Affairs staff conducted almost 1,000 media interviews in 2012 (print, TV, and radio.)

The Public Affairs section also issued 243 news releases in 2012 (both to media and directly to the public through social media). Most of these releases shared important crime prevention information, public notifications of wanted suspects or known criminals, or a request for the public's help in solving crimes.

Social Media

In terms of social media, VicPD is recognized across North America as a leader among law enforcement agencies. This year saw VicPD's social media efforts grow exponentially. At the start of 2012, VicPD was active on Facebook and Twitter and we had a WordPress Blog written by Deputy Chief John Ducker. Throughout the year, we have expanded the program to include Pinterest, Reddit and a second Twitter account under @VicPDTraffic. The growth of these channels has been recognized as a very positive way to communicate directly with our communities without the media "filter."

Social media highlights in 2012 include:

- VicPD being the first police department in North America to take calls for service on Twitter. On Canada Day, the VicPD-managed Twitter group #VicPDHelps was an incredibly successful initiative in encouraging citizens to report incidents through social media. It received huge accolades and was watched closely across the continent.
- VicPD participated in a number of "#yyjChats," which are community discussions that occur online. The last chat that VicPD was involved with made 1.1 million impressions. In other words, our public safety and crime prevention messaging was delivered to more people than we could reach through mainstream media in an entire year.
- VicPD started a Pinterest account and was lauded for the clever use of the tool to return recovered stolen property to its rightful owners. The use of this tool has been profiled on traditional media

By the Numbers...

Social Media Channels Managed: **8**

Social Media Channels:

Twitter: @VicPDCanada

Twitter: @VicPDTraffic

www.Facebook.com/VictoriaPoliceDepartment

www.Pinterest.com/VicPDCanada

www.YouTube.com/VicPDCanada

www.Reddit.com/r/VicPDCanada

www.vicpd.ca/blog

www.crimereports.com

Average reach on Twitter/Day:

16,000 impressions / day

Most Impressions on Twitter:

1.1 Million in 1 hour

Most Impressions on Reddit:

8 – 10 Million in one day

Hours social media is tracked:

**0530 – 2200 hrs and
throughout the weekends.**

Extra cost for social media: **\$0**

channels and we have been successful in returning significant amounts of stolen property in this manner.

- VicPD started on the discussion forum Reddit at the beginning of October, 2012, and quickly became known for our honest approach to communications when we “weeded out a potential pot buyer.” This engagement resulted in our brand and messaging being featured on the front page of Reddit, which exposed many to VicPD for the first time. Statistics on reach predict that between 8 and 10 million people saw our content.
- This year also saw the launch of @VicPDTraffic on Twitter. VicPD Traffic Section officers were encouraged to use this tool as a great way to encourage safe driving and get safety messages out to the community. Three members were trained by the Media Spokesperson/Social Media Officer, who monitors @VicPD Traffic to make sure these officers are adequately supported.

Community Events

Another advantage of having all community engagement functions residing under the CPS/PA section is that VicPD’s participation in community events can be better coordinated. Whereas our previous efforts to attend events was *ad hoc*, now there is more deliberate planning in terms of which events the department takes part in, the composition of that participation, and the nature of what we want to convey.

As such, VicPD successfully participated in the following community events in 2012 (usually with a display and vehicles) and, in doing so, established or furthered our relationships with event organizers, fellow participants, and the general public:

- Quadra Days
- Selkirk Waterfront Festival
- Buccaneer Days Weekend
- Fern Fest
- City of Victoria's 150th celebration
- North Park Neighbourhood Festival
- Township of Esquimalt 100 year celebration

Speakers’ Program

The CPS/PA section worked hard in 2012 to better coordinate VicPD’s participation in public speaking events. Over the course of the year, VicPD senior management, officers and support staff spoke at numerous events throughout the region and nationally. CPS/PA staff helped coordinate many of these appearances, including the development of speaking materials and

presentations, arranging for media opportunities, and/or supporting the appearance through social media efforts.

The VicPD.ca Website

The VicPD website, which serves as a primary source of crime prevention and public safety information for many members of the community, was completely revamped by the Public Affairs section in 2012. The new website incorporates the latest interactive technology, including “Crime Reports” and “Online Crime Reporting,” resulting in it being heralded as North America’s first “crime-fighting website.” It invites the public to get involved in crime prevention with such calls to action as “Track Crime,” “Report Crime,” “Start a Block Watch,” and “Join VicPD” as a volunteer or Reserve member. It features our latest public safety information, links to our social network feeds, and our latest in-house crime prevention videos. Working with a local website development company over a period on 10 months, we were able to design and launch this innovative website for a cost of \$15,000.

Internal Communications

Keeping our entire VicPD membership and staff informed is a high priority for VicPD senior management and the Public Affairs team has a large role to play. To that end, the Public Affairs team designed and launched an electronic bulletin board function on the internal VicPD Intranet site, which is widely used to inform staff of important information.

The Public Affairs section also strives to keep the membership and staff informed through the daily distribution of electronic news clips (video, audio, and print) as well as the production and distribution of internal videos (i.e. Chief’s messages) when appropriate.

Our efforts to help communicate the department’s *Strategic Plan 2020* had unexpected results in 2012. What started as an effort to inform our membership of the status of our strategic planning process resulted in a multi-media campaign that earned the 2012 Innovation Award from the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, regional media coverage, as well as accolades from across Canada.

2) Block Watch *(Program Coordinator: Bev Stewart)*

The Victoria Police Block Watch Program has been operating in the City of Victoria and the Township of Esquimalt since 2003. The Program encourages neighbours to look out for each other and to become actively involved in taking control of crime in their area. The Block Watch program is administered by a Block Watch Coordinator of Victoria Police Department but its success is dependent on the participants who work together to deter crime and improve their quality of life. By taking a few simple steps, such as being aware of activity in their

neighbourhood, citizens are able to enjoy enhanced home security and reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime.

New Blocks

Recruiting volunteers is an ongoing process. During the year, citizens telephone the Victoria Police Department to inquire how they could start a block watch in their neighbourhood. Ten blocks were started in 2012 and more blocks are pending.

Publicity

In order to identify potential volunteers for the Program, it is essential that the program be publicized and recognized within a community. In 2012, the VicPD Public Affairs Section was instrumental in helping promote the program through a variety of mainstream media and social media efforts. Bev Stewart also worked with the VicPD Volunteer Coordinator to have the Crime Watch Volunteers deliver Block Watch information to residences throughout Victoria and Esquimalt.

Also, a Block Watch Action Committee of eight citizens was formed in 2012, which includes a member from the Victoria Police Board and a City of Victoria councilor. The goal of this committee is to expand the program throughout the City of Victoria and the Township of Esquimalt. The committee meets once a month to discuss different ideas about crime prevention and how they can assist in the maintenance of the program. Publicity is a topic that is discussed regularly at these meetings. Six meetings were held by this committee in 2012 to discuss the newly proposed changes to the VicPD website.

The Block Watch Program is constantly involved in various projects and activities to promote the program. Bev Stewart attended the following community functions in 2012:

- Elder Friendly Community Network meetings
- Seniors Serving Seniors meetings
- City of Victoria Chamber of Commerce meetings
- Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce meetings
- Block Watch Society of BC
- One day workshop presented by Jim Diers, author of “Neighbourhood Power”

Safe Communities Grants

Each year, the BC Ministry of Justice offers funding for communities to hold Safe Community Day celebrations. All the Block Watch Captains and Co-Captains have the opportunity to apply for a \$75.00 grant. The requirement to apply for this grant is to organize a crime prevention

By the numbers....

In 2012, there were 4,707 homes, 224 blocks and 326 Captains involved in the Block Watch Program.

event to promote safe communities. In 2012, many Block Watch groups in the City of Victoria and the Township of Esquimalt took advantage of this opportunity.

Communication

Bev Stewart regularly communicates with all the Block Watch Captains and Co-Captains on crime alerts, crime trends and patterns and other information on criminal activity that affects those in the Victoria Police/Esquimalt jurisdiction. She also sends newsletters to each Captain from the Block Watch Society of B.C. Each Block Watch Captain then passes on this information to his/her Block Watch members. Bev Stewart also receives many emails and telephone calls from Captains to help address any issues that may come up in their neighbourhoods.

Once a year, all the Block Watch Captains and Co-Captains representing their areas attend an annual general meeting to discuss different topics on crime prevention. This year, an educational meeting was held at Esquimalt Council Chambers and over 125 citizens attended. Chief Constable Jamie Graham was the guest speaker and reported on *Strategic Plan 2020*.

3) Volunteer Services *(Program Coordinator: Karen Wallis)*

Volunteer Statistics:

- 7,200 hours of volunteer service in 2012.
- 66 active volunteers. This figure is down from 84 in 2011 due to job transfers (4), being hired into the Reserve program (5), retirement, illness, leave, resignation (9).
- Despite the decrease in volunteers, the hours of service have remained steady.

VicPD Volunteers continue to represent the department in a variety of roles:

Volunteer Program Coordination

Volunteers take leadership roles, assisting with the development and coordination of programs.

Support to National Police Board Conference

Volunteers played a central role in the success of the Canadian Association of Police Boards (CAPB) Conference in August 2012.

- Karen Wallis met regularly with the CAPB committee, acting as the conference coordinator of volunteers.

By the numbers....

**66 Volunteers contributed
7,200 hours of service to
VicPD in 2012.**

- VicPD volunteers assisted at the conference in various roles, including:
 - Delegate package and auction item assembly
 - Concierge desk - greeting and assisting candidates
 - Golf tournament – set-up, registration, silent auction, course marshals
 - Early morning walking companions
- Eleven volunteer provided a combined total of 127 hours of service
- The volunteers enjoyed their involvement and expressed appreciation of the excellent recognition provided

Crime Watch

- Van, foot and bike patrol conducted 6 days a week.
- Patrol high-incident areas based on operational intelligence.
- Reported numerous incidents to VicPD:
 - Van Patrol reported impaired driver;
 - Foot patrol and bike patrol reported assaults; and
 - Lock Out Auto Crime patrol reported illegally parked uninsured vehicle.
- Respond to community concern. Assist the public to connect with police assistance, such as reporting, follow up issues, etc.
- Auto Crime Reduction: Issued expired plate notices/Auto Crime Prevention Notices on vehicles:
 - 13,403 vehicles checked;
 - 1,112 expired plate notices issued; and
 - 6,000 crime prevention notices issued.
- In partnership with ICBC, provided free steering wheel locks to registered owners of top ten stolen vehicles.
- Graffiti/vandalism photographed and catalogued, Rock Bay project (one-day anti-graffiti “paint- in”) and Karen Wallis spoke at “ETAG” conference (“Esquimalt Together Against Graffiti”) on the importance of effective volunteer coordination.
- Distribution of poster/flyers associated with:
 - Vancouver hockey riot suspects;

- Fort Street area business break and enters. Distributed crime prevention information and spoke to business owners/managers; and
- Attempted abductions. 135 hours of volunteer service dedicated to this project. Three tips provided by volunteers, unknown how many tips generated from this canvassing effort.

- Support to Block Watch - canvassing where break and enters have been occurring in non-Block Watch neighbourhoods. Distribute crime prevention information packages to encourage residents to join Block Watch.

- Home security checks.

- “Bike Rodeos” - partnering with School Liaison Officers with a focus on bicycle safety.

- Traffic Safety
 - ICBC annual provincial seatbelt survey.
 - ICBC annual provincial distraction survey.

- Speed Watch –attend high crash areas based on community and member referrals. Warning letters sent to high speed vehicles (21 KM over limit.)
 - Three volunteers attended ICBC training in Nanaimo;
 - Development of operation manual;
 - High-crash intersection deployment; and
 - Speed Enforcement Project(s) with Traffic members:
 - “Back to School.”
 - James Bay – Harbour Authority Speed Management Plan (taxi traffic/cruise ship) - 63 volunteer hours, 14 volunteers/reserves, 2206 vehicles, no excessive speed.
 - “Two Strikes” projects – High-risk driving campaign.

- Recruitment/Training:
 - Held in spring & fall annually. Last session held Nov 4th.
 - Bicycle Patrol training held annually. Next session Spring 2013

Front Desk (VicPD Headquarters)

- “Public face” of the department, volunteers greet and assist public.
- Two volunteers recognized by Watch Commander for a great job assisting officer.
- Held Front Desk training meeting, including the issuing of the updated Front Desk policy and procedure manual.

VicPD Historical Society Museum

- Presently in a rebuilding stage, aiming for April 2013 to be back to full capacity.
- Held a strategic planning meeting with Museum volunteers to discuss strategies to meet goal of April 2013 opening.
- Maintain an annual membership with Tourism Victoria to increase profile.
- Visitors from all over the world visit the Museum each year.

Mature Driving

- Four trained volunteers provide educational workshops to senior drivers
- BCAA has handed over the program to COSCO (the Council of Seniors Citizens of BC.) This may affect our involvement in the program.

Tipster Program

- A small group of volunteers, partnering with the BC Securities Commission, keeps an eye out for fraud and report tips directly to the commission.
- This program is lacking interest and we intend to close the program at year end.

By the numbers....

29 Reserve candidates joined the 36 Reserve constables already in the program in 2012.

4) Reserve Constable Program *(Program Coordinator: Cst. Dale Sleightholme)*

The VicPD Reserve Constable program remains a key contributor to daily operations as well as a valuable source of trained and experience regular officer candidates. The program is recognized throughout the Canadian policing community as a leader in the delivery of community-based Reserve officer policing. Through the Reserve Constable Program, volunteers

receive first-hand experience in delivering crime prevention programs to citizens and businesses.

The program is healthy, with 36 Reserve officers on strength and another 29 undergoing training (to be completed in March 2013).

2012 saw ten VicPD Reserve Constables hired as regular members in police agencies across Canada, including four at VicPD. This is a testament to the quality of officers who join the program, the leadership of program coordinator Cst. Dale Sleightholme, and the valuable experience they gain as a VicPD Reserve Constable.

5) Crime Free Multi-Housing Program *(Program Coordinator: Cst. Dale Sleightholme)*

The Crime Free-Multi-Housing Program remains a key crime prevention program for VicPD. It is designed to keep illegal activity away from residential multi-family sites through a volunteer-based program that provides certification for multi-family properties of all sizes.

In addition to the 141 buildings that are certified under the program in Victoria and Esquimalt, eight more were certified in 2012 and Cst. Sleightholme conducted a managers' training course during the year. Interest in the program remains strong and Cst. Sleightholme is working with a number of building managers and owners on the continued expansion of the program in 2013.

By the numbers....

In 2012, eight buildings joined the 141 already certified under the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

Conclusion

The amalgamation of Crime Prevention Services with the Public Affairs team in 2012 has resulted in an alignment of resources that will facilitate the continued development and delivery of innovative and effective crime prevention efforts into 2013. This new approach to connecting with the public will be formalized in a comprehensive *Community Engagement Plan 2013-15* that, once launched in early 2013, will clearly outline the department's community engagement strategy for the next three years.

The combined Crime Prevention Services/Public Affairs team of 109 (including VicPD staff, Reserves and Volunteers) is proud of their accomplishments in 2012 and are looking forward to expanding the reach and effect of our crime prevention efforts in 2013.