

Message from your local RCMP

Posted: October 1, 2009

It has been almost a year since the R.C.M.P. assumed the policing responsibilities for the Rural Municipality of East St. Paul. Back in October 2008, a transitional team was established and immediately began working in our community. Permanent members of the new detachment were identified from across the province and began arriving shortly afterwards. On Wednesday, September 23rd, 2009 an official Opening Ceremony took place to celebrate the fact that we had officially progressed from the transitional phase to where we find ourselves today, with 11 R.C.M.P. members and two clerical support staff permanently assigned to our East St. Paul Detachment.

Dignitaries present included Federal M.P. Joy Smith, Manitoba's Deputy Minister of Justice Jeff Schnoor, Provincial M.L.A. Ron Schuler, the Mayor of the R.M. of East St. Paul Lawrence Morris, and Councillor Doreen Negrich-Lozinski. R.C.M.P. dignitaries included the Commanding Officer of "D" Division Assistant Commissioner Bill Robinson, Chief Superintendent Peter Hourihan, Inspector Scott Kolody, and R.C.M.P. Chaplain Wayne Larstone.

To open the ceremony, East St. Paul resident Eliza Bell (12 yrs old) blessed us with the singing of our National Anthem. Assistant Commissioner Robinson later presented Eliza with a framed Certificate of Appreciation thanking her for assisting us with our Grand Opening. A number of R.C.M.P. support units attended and displayed some of the equipment they had at their disposal. These units included the R.C.M.P. Underwater Recovery Team, members of the R.C.M.P. Emergency Response Team, R.C.M.P. Crisis Negotiators, and an R.C.M.P. service dog with his handler. Following the ceremony, attendees were invited to visit the various displays, interact with the various support team representatives, and tour the detachment. We couldn't have asked for better weather that day and it was a pleasure meeting with people from throughout the community.

I recall back in the spring when I first arrived, former members of the East St. Paul Police Service told me that I could expect to see a rise in property offenses in our community during the summer months. This past summer our detachment members made a concerted effort to increase patrols in the residential and business areas of East St. Paul, particularly during the late night/early morning hours. Members of our local "Citizens on Patrol" were also out during the summer providing those extra "eyes and ears" that we greatly appreciate. Despite our best efforts, we still encountered isolated incidents of vandalism and thefts. What struck me over the summer was that many of these incidents might have been prevented if we had taken better measures to secure our belongings. In several cases items of value like purses, wallets, electronics, and tools were left clearly visible both in unlocked vehicles, and in the rear box of pickup trucks. Residences were left unlocked when nobody was home, and garage doors were left open and unattended both during the day and overnight. The reason I bring this up is not to re-victimize the victims, but to raise the issue that the notion of believing that we can live in a community where we can leave our cars and homes unlocked is no longer prudent. By failing to

take reasonable measures to secure our valuables, we place ourselves in a position where we make it easier for criminals to conduct their activities. Given the growth that our community is presently experiencing, our vicinity to the city of Winnipeg, and the amount of traffic that flows through our community, we must remain vigilant...keep an eye out for our neighbours...and take reasonable steps to secure our residences and belongings. By following these simple steps we can certainly help to reduce the chances of being the victims of crime.

As summer comes to a close (did we really have a summer this year?) your local R.C.M.P. detachment members are now focusing on an increased presence at our schools. Please help to keep our kids safe by being mindful of the increased number of school busses on our streets, and the reduced speed limits in our school zones.

As always, I welcome your feedback, questions, and/or concerns.

Sgt. Mike Van Kats
Detachment Commander
East St. Paul R.C.M.P.