



Royal Canadian
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RCMP
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Your File - Votre référence

Our File - Notre référence

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**RE: Submission for Award
Red Deer City Traffic Services**

The City of Red Deer is located in Central Alberta between Edmonton and Calgary. The city is the third largest community in Alberta with a population of 85,000 and a trading area of 120,000 people. The city has grown 22 % between 2001 and 2006 as have the neighboring communities. The daytime population increases 20 % thereby increasing congestion. The communities infrastructure has not kept pace with this development and as a result collision levels increased from 2600 in 2003 to 4500 in 2007. This has created strains on the limited policing resources of the RCMP Traffic Services Unit at Red Deer Detachment.

The City of Red Deer contracts policing services with the RCMP. The contract is one of the largest municipal contracts in the Prairie provinces. The traffic services component of the policing of Red Deer includes education, enforcement and the investigations of collisions. The RCMP Traffic Unit also has the added responsibility of maintenance and calibration of alcohol measuring instruments.

In the fall of 2004 the officer in charge of the detachment ordered the Traffic Services Unit to focus on impaired driving as impaired related collisions were rising from 100 in 2003 to 120 in 2004. Impaired driving arrests had remained fairly constant at 240 in 2002 and 266 in 2003. The Traffic Services Unit brought in National Road Safety Vision 2010 (RSV 2010) instructors from RCMP Division Headquarters to conduct the training for the RCMP and city traffic enforcement members. The training focused on the importance of occupant restraints and impaired driving enforcement.

The Traffic Unit partnered with the Alberta Motor Association (AMA), the local chapter of Mother's Against Drunk Drivers (MADD), and the local media to launch the Christmas Check stop Program, which ran for six weeks. Volunteers from AMA and MADD participated in the Check stop Program. The campaign was very effective in increasing public awareness and in the number of arrests. It was quite apparent that impaired driving was a definite problem in the community.

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As a result of the success of the Check stop Program during Christmas, the program was reactivated in March for four weeks and was even more successful in arrests than the Christmas initiative.

The Check stop Program became a year round initiative in order to combat the apparent impaired driving problem, increase police visibility in the community, and to deter and identify other criminal activity detected during the initial Check stops. The year round Check stops almost doubled the number of arrests for impaired driving from 266 in 2003 to 471 in 2006. There was a decrease in alcohol related injury collisions by 22% from 116 in 2004 to 78 in 2006 during a period of dramatic economic and population growth. Over this same period of time the Traffic Unit underwent an almost 100% turnover of staff, however remained focused on RSV 2010 goals. The partnerships with Red Deer City Traffic Engineering Department, MADD, AMA, Central Alberta Safe Communities and local media strengthened during this period of time. The increase in arrests, visibility, as well as a decrease in alcohol related collisions was welcomed by all partners. Chi Lee, the City of Red Deer Traffic Engineer, credits the Check stop and related media campaign for the significant reduction in alcohol related injury collisions.

The Traffic Unit also focused on occupant restraints as part of its year round enforcement campaign. Each Wednesday was designated as an enforcement day for occupant restraints and as a team, a spotter was used to identify non-compliance and the remaining members issued violation tickets. The campaign resulted in an average of 100 charges being laid each week and an increased compliance with seatbelt use to 88 %. The media partnered in this campaign by releasing stories on television and in local newspapers. Photos of collisions where heads impacted windshields were used as well as statistics. The Rollover Simulator and Seatbelt Convincer are used by Red Deer RCMP Traffic Services to educate the public during Engineered Life Space Presentations. The unit is also involved in the Alberta Occupant Restraint Program and has a member on the Communications Sub-committee. This committee studies, develops, reviews, and plans communication strategies for seatbelt campaigns. These strategies include the development and delivery of radio advertising, billboards, posters, and other printed materials.

A member from the Red Deer RCMP Traffic Services Unit attends monthly meetings of the Alberta Motor Transport Association and is a Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance inspector as well as a Dangerous Goods Transportation Act inspector. This involvement with the Transport industry provides unit members with the opportunity to conduct Commercial vehicle checks with other police agencies including Edmonton Police Services and Calgary Police Services as well as Alberta Transportation .

The Red Deer City Traffic Engineering Department partnered with the Traffic Unit to identify traffic collision areas in the city. The engineering department had in the past received collision data from Alberta Transportation. The data was dated and general in nature and as a result did not meet the needs of the city. The Traffic Unit and engineering department agreed to have collision reports copied and provided to the engineering department prior to being forwarded to Alberta Transportation. Personal data subject to privacy was deleted. The data was correlated by the city and real-time statistics were realized. The engineering department was able to modify traffic controls, plan future initiatives and provide information to other city departments, such as the Public Works Department in order to reduce collisions. For example, areas where road conditions were frequently icy/snowy and therefore responsible for an inordinate number of collisions, were elevated in priority for snow removal and sanding. High collision areas were identified for increased enforcement.

High risk drivers are a target of enforcement in order to reduce the likelihood of collisions and as a result are included in RSV 2010. The Red Deer City RCMP Traffic Unit had previously bulk-filed collisions and did not usually perform a follow-up investigation. If a blatant infraction had led to the collision, a violation traffic ticket may have been issued for the violation. After RSV 2010 training and in an effort to reduce collisions, the Traffic Unit initiated a proactive campaign of reviewing all collisions. Where the evidence suggested that the driver was responsible for causing a collision, further investigation was undertaken and charges were laid if appropriate. In a recent month a review of collisions indicated over 90% of the collision files were cleared by charge. In some cases the same person was identified as the high risk driver responsible for a number of collisions and ticketed for each collision. The result was numerous demerit points on their driver's licence and the investigators forwarded a letter to the provincial driver's licence control board with police's concerns.

The change in collision investigation may appear to be reactive versus proactive, however the result is demerit points on the driving records of the high risk drivers who are responsible for causing collisions. In partnership with the Prosecutor's Office, an Early Case Resolution alternative to simply paying a fine, was instituted. This option allows an accused to plead their case with a prosecutor prior to the setting of a trial date. This program was established specifically for traffic court and has been a tremendous success by reducing court time for members thereby allowing for more enforcement time. A number of additional benefits include less time spent preparing court briefs and less inconvenience for witnesses and other parties involved in collisions having to attend court to testify. The penalties including fines and demerit points will hopefully change the high risk driving behavior.

Impaired driving has been and will always be a concern and is a primary focus of RSV 2010. The Red Deer City RCMP in conjunction with the local Prosecutor's Office, have developed and modified an impaired driving check-sheet, which may become a model provincially. The check-sheet is completed by the arresting officer throughout the investigation of impaired drivers and becomes the officer's notes at trial. The check-sheet involves the elements of the offence and key issues which may lead to an acquittal. In consultation with prosecutors the check-sheet includes common disclosure evidence requested by defense lawyers. The check-sheet results in earlier guilty pleas, fewer trials, and increases prosecutor's and police officer's confidence in cases set for trial.

In an effort to improve traffic safety in the City of Red Deer, the RCMP approached the city council and requested that a number of special constables be hired specifically to enforce traffic laws. The city approved the plan and three new members teamed up with the RCMP members and completed RSV 2010 training. The combined unit was able to be more effective with selective traffic enforcement and Check stop programs. An 'esprit de corps' developed with members sharing their knowledge in various areas of traffic enforcement and education. When members received questions regarding enforcement action by motorists at roadside, other team members were available and able to offer their expertise to resolve issues which could have escalated into confrontation. The team approach allowed the Special Constables to gain acceptance into the community, increase visibility to the motoring public, and make the workplace a safer environment as trained police officers were available to assist if any confrontation developed.

The Red Deer City RCMP has focused on RSV 2010 despite experiencing some challenges with resources and staff turnover. We have been able to realize results such as a 22% reduction in alcohol related injury collision by partnering with local media, MADD, and Special Constable

Enforcement Officers at a time of rapid population and economic growth. We have partnered with various agencies to educate the public on our year round Check stop and seatbelt enforcement campaigns. Through effective use of our limited resources we have focused our enforcement efforts on seatbelt compliance and arresting impaired drivers. Speed enforcement is still conducted but is limited to less than 10% of our enforcement efforts. The priorities were determined as a result of RSV 2010 goals and with the realization that eliminating collisions in the city of Red Deer was unrealistic. The focus on occupant restraint compliance and impaired driving enforcement will reduce deaths, injuries, and collisions. Collision investigation and the laying of charges remains a major component in our efforts. The last part of the three E's of Traffic Safety, engineering, has been moved forward in Red Deer by partnering with Chi Lee, the Red Deer City Traffic Engineer, to provide current and accurate data regarding collisions occurring in the city. As a result, engineering initiatives have been developed to reduce collisions.

By focusing on two key elements of RSV 2010 and partnering with other agencies in the City of Red Deer, we have reduced collision and sent a clear message to the community that we are serious about traffic safety and reducing the harm on our roadways.

Sergeant Bob Bell will accept the award on behalf of the Red Deer RCMP Traffic Services Unit.

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(Submitted on behalf of the RCMP, Red Deer Detachment, Traffic Services Unit, Red Deer, AB.)



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