

# Crime Stoppers, NCACT launch campaign against contraband tobacco

By Kathryn Boyle  
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Crime Stoppers Halton and the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco (NCACT) have partnered up to keep illegal trades off our streets.

A campaign will run for the next month warning Halton Hills residents of the link between criminal activity and contraband tobacco. Posters will be hung by high schools, in bus shelters and on GO train station platforms and is targeted towards youth in the area that may be involved in the purchasing of contraband tobacco.

According to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), one in three cigarettes purchased in Ontario is contraband, giving our province the worst statistic in the country.

“The main objective of the campaign is to educate the public on the link between contraband tobacco and the funding of crime and organized crime in our neighbourhoods,” Norm Bellefontaine, chair of Crime Stoppers Halton, said. “By educating the public, perhaps we’ll get more calls, more tips on contraband tobacco usage or perhaps tips on any other crimes in the neighbourhood.”

Bellefontaine explained there are currently 175 organized criminal gangs in Canada that are involved in the selling and distributing of contraband tobacco. According to the RCMP, some of these gangs are also involved in weapons, drugs and in some instances, human trafficking.

According to Gary Grant, NCACT spokesperson and retired Toronto police officer, many believe the crime is victimless but in reality, it’s the opposite.

“Many people think that the contraband tobacco trade is a victimless crime,”



Gary Grant, NCACT spokesperson (left) and Norm Bellefontaine, chair of Crime Stoppers Halton have teamed their organizations up to alert citizens to the pitfalls of contraband tobacco. Posters will be hung by high schools, in bus shelters and on GO train station platforms and is targeted towards youth in the area that may be involved in the purchasing of contraband tobacco.

Photo by Kathryn Boyle

Grant explained. “Those that do acknowledge that it’s illegal say it’s just people cheating the tax man. You’re not cheating the taxman; you’re cheating one another. It’s not the tax man’s money, it’s your money, it’s my money and it’s everyone’s money that should be going to the government treasury to pay for projects for all Ontarians.”

Through the program, the two organizations hope more people can identify contraband tobacco and receive confidence in reporting the crimes.

“It’s a cautionary tale to other provinces to get a handle on the problem right now,” Grant said. “We’ve already got a huge battle on our hands.”

“We don’t want to let it get any worse and try to stop it before it becomes totally unstopable.”

If you suspect someone you know is involved in contraband tobacco, please call Halton Regional Police at 905-878-5581. If you wish to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers Halton at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

# OPP closes investigation into Eden Mills fire

By Eamonn Maher  
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The Ontario Provincial Police said Monday that a criminal investigation into the deaths of an Eden Mills couple and the fire at their home on Nov. 21 is closed and no further information will be released.

Wellington OPP Const. Marylou Schwindt said that post-mortem results would also not be divulged out of respect for the grieving families.

She added that an investigation determined there is no threat to public safety stemming from the incident.

Halton Hills firefighter Trevor McNally, 44, and his wife Susanne, 45 perished in the blaze at their Lowrie Lane home in Eden Mills.

On Nov. 24, an OPP spokesperson said they were unable to comment on whether the fire caused the deaths of the McNallys.

Fire damage to the residence was reportedly confined to the interior.



# Georgetown man charged after kicking in neighbour’s front door

Halton Regional Police responded to a call of a possible home invasion on Moore Park Cres. early Saturday morning, only to determine later that a neighbour was responsible for kicking open the front door to the victim family’s home.

Police received a report of a break and enter at approximately 2 a.m. after residents of the home with two young children heard a loud crashing noise.

Officers responded and set up a perimeter around the home along with deploying a canine tracking unit.

Following an investigation, officers spoke with a man in a neighbouring home who eventually admitted to kicking in the front door on his way home from a night of drinking, explaining that he’d been pressured by friends to vandalize the home.

A 20-year-old male was charged with mischief.

Thursday, December 10, 2015 - The IFP - Halton Hills - www.theifp.ca Page 3

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