

January is Crime Stoppers Month

Crime Stoppers tips led to 28 arrests in 2015

By Eamonn Maher
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Town of Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette proclaimed January Crime Stoppers Month in this municipality at a ceremony last week at the Civic Centre.

Since its inception in 1988, the Crime Stoppers of Halton program has received a number of anonymous tips that have assisted police in solving more than 2,100 misdeeds. Tips also led to the arrest of 1,119 individuals, the seizure of almost \$18 million in illegal narcotics and the recovery of more than \$2.6 million worth of stolen property.

From the inception of the world's first program in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1976, the success of Crime Stoppers has been uniting the community, media and police in a three-way partnership in the battle against crime.

The statistic achieved in Halton demonstrates the vital role that Crime Stoppers plays to take tips from anonymous callers and provide the information to police to assist them in solving a myriad of crimes.

Last year tips to Halton Crime Stoppers led to the arrest of 28 individuals, the recovery of \$83,936 in stolen property and the seizure of illegal drugs with a street value of \$21,527. Statistics also show that since Halton Crime Stoppers came into existence, tips to the program have led to the arrests of 1,119 people, the recovery of \$2,643,517 in stolen property and the seizure of drugs worth \$17,995,013 on the street.

"It is an extremely valuable program that not only assists police in the fight against crime, but creates safer neighborhoods and makes residents feel much more secure," said Det. Const. Paul Proteau, coordinator of

Halton's Crime Stoppers program.

"Crime Stoppers is also much more effective because of the cooperation it receives from various partners who establish initiatives to alert people about crime concerns or fund projects that directly tackle criminal activity in the community," Proteau said. "Partnerships formed within the community, through the media or with the police, are truly the lifeblood of Crime Stoppers. They create the awareness that generates the tips to help solve crime."



Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette (centre) presents a support letter to Halton Regional Police Det. Const. Paul Proteau (left) and Crime Stoppers of Halton board chair Norm Bellefontaine. Bonnette declared January Crime Stoppers Month in Halton Hills.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

Help catch the bad guys with SCRAM

By Julie Slack
Metroland Media Group

Crime investigation has moved beyond yellow police tape, interviewing a few witnesses and searching out bad guys. It's gone high-tech—digital to be specific.

And One District (Milton and Halton Hills) Halton Regional Police (HRP) superintendent Chris Perkins is hoping to take advantage of that.

Security Camera Registration and Monitoring (SCRAM) is a community-based crime prevention opportunity that gives homeowners a chance to help catch the bad guys.

With more and more home security cameras being installed every day, Perkins wants a little help for his investigating officers.

It's simple. Residents can volunteer to register their home video surveillance equipment at HRPS's website. It becomes part of a database, nothing more than that, explained Perkins.

But in terms of police legwork, it could make solving crimes a lot easier, and more importantly allow it to be solved faster. And for most citizens, knowing they've helped solve a crime is an appealing thought.

In place since last year, the program hasn't been all that popular, and Perkins is disappointed in how few people have registered their equipment—only 70 households in fact.

"I don't know if it's the whole 'big brother' stigma, or what, but there's nothing for people to be afraid of," he said last week.

Registered surveillance equipment gives officers a chance to see where a camera is when investigating a nearby crime. It assists them in the initial stages of an investigation.

For example, if a police officer is investigating a neighbourhood crime—perhaps an assault, or a robbery—they canvass neighbours to see if they saw, heard or noticed anything suspicious. Perkins said it can be time-consuming, especially if they focus on a full circle around the crime.

With the knowledge of security cameras in specific locations, police can better focus their investigation.

They can immediately identify suspect vehicles, or suspects themselves may have been picked up on third-party systems.

"More and more people are installing this low-cost/high-tech equipment and we're just trying to take advantage of it, and help keep the community safer," he said.

Police have no access to the equipment, just because it's been registered.

"The police do not have access to it, unless you voluntarily hand it over, if requested," he said, adding that residents can also withdraw their registration at any time.

The database can only be seen by the HRPS, and nobody will know that you've registered your equipment.

To register go to <https://goo.gl/71B8ad>

To learn more about SCRAM, go to <http://www.hrps.on.ca/CommunityPolicing/Pages/securitycameraregistration.aspx>

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