

CANADA'S FIRST CANINE ARSON DETECTOR PROGRAM



Canada's first Canine Arson Detector program got its start in Russell. Russell Residents Nepean Firefighter Ian Wade and O.P.P. Constable Tom Murray trained a yellow Labrador Retriever named Sacha for the task. What started turned into a first for Canada and a second in North America.

After some inquiry, Ian soon discovered the Connecticut State Police had a Pilot Project of this very nature underway. With their help and encouragement the training was soon to start. During the summer of 1987 Wade and Murray worked with Sacha, in their spare time, trained her to detect petroleum based accelerants and the remains of fire victims. That September the Deputy Fire Marshall of Ontario and 3 members of the Fire Marshall's Investigation Unit were in Russell to see Sacha work. Impressed with what they saw, they returned to Toronto and arranged for a budget for the Project. The first part of the budget was used to send Ian and Sacha to Connecticut to compare Canada's first with the U.S. first, as it turned out Sacha was ready for Service.

In the spring of 1988 until the spring of 1989, the team of Ian and Sacha were on contract to the provinces Fire Investigation Unit and during this time they were involved in many successful searches in the Ottawa area.

On April 17, 1989 Sacha and her handler Ian Wade were introduced to Ontario