

Crime Stoppers tips down, but drug seizures up

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**
The Champion

Fewer tips received, fewer arrests made and fewer cases cleared.

That's the picture upon the recent release of Crime Stoppers of Halton's statistics for the first half of this year compared with the same period last year.

Crime Stoppers received 34 per cent fewer tips from January 1 to June 30 this year than last year. There were 17 fewer arrests and 18 fewer cases cleared.

But not all of this year's numbers dropped. There was a huge increase in the narcotics seized by Crime Stoppers — a rise of \$1.2 million — for a total of \$3.5 million seized.

"The numbers have dropped slightly in some (categories), but they've increased in others," said Halton Crime Stoppers coordinator Sgt. Ray Bruce, adding, "We blew away last year's statistics in narcotic recovery."

Sgt. Bruce said he doesn't know exactly why Crime Stoppers hasn't received as many calls as the first half of last year — 201, down from 269 — but that he's not concerned.

"I think the statistics will fluctuate. Next year they might be higher, and the year after they might be lower. Anything over 200 (calls received) I'm happy with."

Quality of tips is what matters

He added that it's the quality of tips, not quantity, that's important.

"My opinion is the decrease in the number of tips is not a reflection on the program — we're more concerned with quality. The statistics indicate that the quality's still there."

He said a few factors contributed to the large amount of drugs recovered — some good factors and some bad.

The drug bureau deserves credit because of its crack down on area grow houses "where the majority of seizures occur," Sgt. Bruce said.

Another factor is the public has been better educated recently through the media about how to identify grow houses and the importance of reporting them to police.

Unfortunately, Sgt. Bruce said, the increase is also due to the fact that there are more grow houses around now.

A figure Sgt. Bruce said he finds interesting is that in the first six months this year, only one of the nine approved rewards was collected. Out of the \$1,500 approved for rewards, only \$200 was paid out. "I'm sometimes shocked when people give good information and don't call back and claim their reward," Sgt. Bruce said. "The community can be proud of the fact that rewards aren't the motivating factor."

Crime Stoppers provides a 24-hour toll-free hotline for anonymous crime tips and pays up to \$1,000 when the information supplied leads to an arrest. For more information about Halton Crime Stoppers or to report a crime, call 1-800-222-TIPS (1-800-222-8477) or check out Crime Stoppers' Web site at www.halton-crimestoppers.com.

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