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44 PAGES "Using Communication to Build Better Communities"



Convoy

A convoy of about 200 tractors makes its way eastbound on Hwy. 401, just west of Mississauga Road, Wednesday morning enroute to a mass demonstration at Queen's Park. Inset, a tractor displays a placard sending a message to the Ontario government. Farmers, unhappy with a number of agriculture-related government policies, entered the highway at Winston Churchill Boulevard at 9 a.m.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

Crime's down, but it's more violent

Last year's crime statistics show crime was at a 30-year low in Halton last year.

However, violent crime — while lower in numbers — accounted for more of the total number of offences last year and counterfeit crime was on the rise by nearly eight per cent.

The statistics were released earlier this week by the Halton Regional Police Service, which announced criminal offences per 100,000 citizens are the lowest in more than 30 years.

Halton Police Chief Ean Algar was cautiously optimistic.

"The encouraging statistics confirm that Halton continues to be one of the safest communities in Canada with a population in excess of 100,000 people," said Chief Algar. However, he added, "Only the absence of any crime completely is wor-

thy of boasting. Although I am very pleased with our numbers and the hard work of our organization, there is still work to be done."

Chief Algar vowed the police will continue to partner and consult with the community "as part of our continued commitment to keeping our community safe."

Analysis of the statistics indicates that 1,312 fewer criminal offences occurred in 2004 (16,746) than were recorded in 2003 (18,058).

This represents a decrease in the crime rate of 10.1 per cent.

Last year's clearance rate (39.6 per cent) was also higher than in 2003 (37.7 per cent).

However, total calls for service increased by 660, or 0.7 per cent — 97,617 — in 2004 compared to 96,957 in 2003.

Violent crime offences decreased from 1,959 in

2003 to 1,844 in 2004, representing a violent crime rate decrease of 8.8 per cent.

However, violent crimes accounted for more of all criminal offences in 2004 — 11 per cent — compared to 2003 — 10.8 per cent.

Property crimes decreased from 9,618 in 2003 to 8,445 in 2004. That's a 14.9 per cent decrease in the property crime rate.

The category "other crimes" was also down slightly, by 0.4 per cent, in 2004 (from 6,481 to 6,457 offences) representing a rate decrease of 3.5 per cent.

However, counterfeit offences which fall within this crime group was up 7.8 per cent last year — a jump of 125 offences from 1,596 in 2003 to 1,712 in 2004.

In 2002, only 692 counterfeit offences were recorded.

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