



Dan Van Mackelberg, 21, left, and Dan Pillon, 35, right, are the newest additions to the Essex Police Service. The pair graduated from the Ontario Police College in July.

Essex Police Service welcomes new recruits

New grads move vets to investigation division

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

The Essex Police Service has hired two new officers in an effort to strengthen its criminal investigative branch, said Const. Gary Gamberta.

Dan Van Mackelberg, 21, and Dan Pillon, 35, were recently hired to give more experienced officers an opportunity to concentrate on three areas: drugs, youth crime and domestic violence.

Gamberta said there hasn't been an increase in this type of activity, but the service hasn't been able to spend enough time investigating the matters because of street calls.

"This is still a new and developing service," Gamberta said. "These new officers are starting out with the service - at the ground level."

Van Mackelberg and Pillon both graduated from the Ontario Police College in Aylmer, Ont. after applying to the Essex Service in December and passing a three-month interview process.

They attended classes from May 1 to July 27 in the school's biggest class ever of 470 students.

Since graduation, the new recruits have been training with coach officers at police headquarters in Harrow.

They will be sworn in as constables Aug. 14 during a ceremony at the Windsor Court House.

Pillon has been working toward a career in law enforcement for 16 years. The St. Joachim native formerly worked as a security guard at Casino Windsor and the city's Ford

Assembly Plant.

"This is something I've wanted to do my whole life," Pillon said. "I love it, so far it's everything I expected it to be."

Van Mackelberg, who's lived in Essex for most of his life, said he always hoped to work in the area.

Gamberta said the pair will have a "very good future with the service with a real chance for advancement."

There are a handful of local officers who are nearing retirement and will probably leave the service within five years, Gamberta added.

The department is in the process of hiring another officer and plans on sending the recruit to the Ontario Police College in September. The new officers were hired with help from a provincial grant.

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