

CHECKING UNDER THE HOOD



STAFF PHOTO/SIGERD WITTEVEEN

Dennis Alsop sits in his 1917 Oldsmobile V8 7-passenger Touring car as Stouffville Missionary Church pastor Mark Pratt examines the original engine. In the background is Alsop's 1935 Ford Pro Street class car. Both will be at the Antique Car rally at the Church on Saturday, Sept. 5 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

REGION: Emergency phone system still being misused after four years

Problems plague 911

BY RICK VANDERLINDE
STAFF WRITER

Four years after it was introduced, some York Region residents are still misusing 911.

York Region police dispatchers continue to receive nuisance calls from pranksters dialing the emergency number.

And residents are still using 911 for obvious non-life-threatening injuries and petty crimes.

"All we can do is politely ask them to hang up and call back on our regular number," Insp. Bruce Herridge said.

Herridge is launching an information campaign Sept. 10 to inform York Region residents how to properly use the enhanced 911 system.

While nuisance calls remain a problem, cellular telephones create the biggest headache for emergency dispatchers.

Herridge said, under the enhanced system, the address belonging to a caller automatically

comes up on a screen when 911 is dialed on a "wired" telephone.

But that's not the case with cellular phones.

"When a cell call comes in, the dispatcher doesn't know where the caller is," Herridge said.

"And sometimes they can't give a street address or even a landmark, they don't know where they are."

The police department wants cellular callers to be aware of their surroundings — especially addresses and street names when they call 911.

The cellular phone problem may have cost a York Region man his life when a 911 call was made on a cell phone in 1995.

A 35-year-old man died of a heart attack even though an ambulance was stationed just three minutes away.

Somehow, the 911 call was rerouted to an ambulance service in Barrie.

Herridge said with so many 911 calls being placed from cellular

telephones, the problem has to be fixed soon.

The cellular phone industry in the United States is about to create a system that will allow dispatchers to pinpoint a 911 caller within 100 feet, using satellite tracking systems.

But so far, the CRTC — a federal regulator — hasn't required the Canadian cellular phone industry to implement a similar system.

"There has to be some pressure on the industry," Herridge said.

"It is not going to be much longer until we have to turn the heat up."

Another area that continues to cause problems for the 911 system is rural residences that haven't switched to municipal addresses.

This causes problems when a 911 call is made because the system doesn't recognize an address that hasn't been placed in the system.

Herridge said the 911 campaign will be "kicked off" at York Region headquarters in Newmarket.

POLICE: Gang of thieves targets parking lots, golf courses

Thugs stealing cars, contents

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
STAFF WRITER

A gang of thugs is making a fortune in Markham stealing not only the contents of parked cars, but often the cars themselves.

And the victims are often oblivious to the thefts — even though they take place under their noses.

In many cases, the car owners are playing baseball, shooting a round of golf or inside the office at work.

The rash of thefts in the past month has York Regional Police Det. Bisson Ramdewar concerned and looking for the evidence he needs to make arrests.

Ramdewar is not only asking for the public's help to nab these criminals, he's reminding residents of common-sense tips that could prevent this crime from happening.

The suspects target baseball diamonds, golf club parking lots and the parking lots of big office buildings in Markham, he said. "People go play ball and leave items like their wallets or purses in their cars, which aren't secured. These guys use car theft devices like Slim Jims to get in. They steal whatever's inside, and if they can, the car itself."

According to Ramdewar, since late July 10 incidents of car break-ins and theft have occurred — primarily in industrial plazas along Hwy. 7, Woodbine Avenue, Valleywood Drive and Denison Street.

Thefts from ball parks and golf courses along Hwy. 7 have also been reported.

Credit cards, cell phones, car stereos, sports equipment, even sunglasses are taken.

In a recent incident, which occurred in the parking lot of a commercial business on Valleywood Drive at Hwy. 7, west of Hwy. 404, police managed to get a video of the theft.

It was July 28, about 2:30 p.m. when the suspects

pulled up in a blue or gray four-door Honda Accord or Prelude.

The still photos pulled from the video tape clearly show the suspects casing cars in the lot before deciding upon a green '92 Jetta.

Two frames later, they're in the Jetta and gone.

The car was recovered six days later in a nearby industrial plaza parking lot, stripped of the stereo, with the dashboard and interior damaged.

The cell phone, sunglasses and \$300 worth of baseball equipment were also gone.

"A lot of these parking lots have cameras and this time we were fortunate to get the suspects on video tape," Ramdewar said.

The four main suspects are described as male of East Indian descent, between 18 and 25. They still may be driving the Honda described above.

Ramdewar is asking employers, park and golf course personnel and the general public to keep an eye on cars parked nearby and report any suspicious activity or loitering. And he's cautioning drivers to be smart.

"People make it easy for criminals sometimes," he said. "They leave their car doors open or their valuables in plain sight. These are really crimes of opportunity — don't give them the opportunity."

Ramdewar offers the following advice:

Don't leave valuables in the car. It's better to bring them along. If you must leave things in your car, make sure they are out of sight, preferably locked in the trunk.

Even semi-permanent items such as cell phones should be locked away, if possible. If thieves get in, odds are they can pop the trunk, but if they don't see anything inviting, they may pass on by.

If you see anything suspicious call Ramdewar at 881-1221, ext. 7541 or CrimeStoppers anonymously at 222-TIPS.



STAFF PHOTO/JOAN RANSBERRY

Ian Adamson stands in front of his commercial sign asking the public's help to find his two lost kittens.

An appeal to the public

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
STAFF WRITER

A last ditch public appeal has been issued for two lost kittens.

The kittens went missing on July 13th from the Gormley Green Houses on Stouffville Road.

"They're our greenhouse cats, said owner Ian Adamson.

"They're less than a year old. They're both orange fluffies. And, they're really cute."

The kittens weren't gone long when Adamson decided to dedicate a large commercial sign to their plight.

While the two cats are not related, they look alike. Adamson, his

staff and the mother of one of the kittens have searched high and low. "We miss them a great deal," said Adamson.

The case of the missing kittens has turned into quite a mystery. The fact that they disappeared together begs certain questions.

"I think someone spotted them. Because they're so cute, they scooped them up. Still, I don't know for sure," said Adamson.

In the last six weeks, thousands of motorists have seen the sign asking for help to find the kittens. "I keep hoping," said Adamson.

Anyone with any information about the orange kittens, call 887-0000.

Flyer Inserts For Thursday, August 27, 1998

Business Depot
Sears
The Bay
Today's Homes
Canadian Tire

Double Double Pizza
Canadian Tire - St.
Canadian Tire - R Hill
Beaver Lumber - Nwmk
Home Hardware - Nwmk

Sears - Nwmk
Upper Canada Mall
Nwmk
Barrie Living - Nwmk

Selected areas only

MARKHAM
ECONOMIST & SUN • Stouffville Tribune
WE'RE FIRST IN DISTRIBUTION

We've delivered 31,877,740 flyers door-to-door, so far this year.

For further information on how we can deliver your flyers call

Linda MacFarlane - (Markham) at (905) 294-8244 or Melissa Scott - (Stouffville) at (905) 640-2100

PS PHARMASAVE Health Centre

Prescriptions
Accept all Major Drug Plans
Cards and Gifts - Crabtree and Evelyn
Natural Health Products - Live Well Health Clinics
DELIVERY & GIFT WRAPPING SERVICE

20 FRED ABBEY DRIVE (just off Main St.) UNIONVILLE
TEL: 944-8300