

June 28, 2007

84 Sheriffs now patrolling Alberta's highways

Program has put brakes on thousands of speeders since September 2006

Edmonton... Albertans driving this Canada Day long weekend will see an increased level of enforcement by the province's Sheriff Highway Patrol. Twenty-four more Sheriffs will join the ranks, bringing the total to 84 provincewide.

"The Sheriff Highway Patrol's presence in and around Alberta communities is raising the public's awareness about safe driving habits on Alberta roadways," said Fred Lindsay, Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. "We're bolstering the ranks of the Sheriffs not only in time for long weekends but also to ensure Albertans drive safely throughout the year. Their work also complements enforcement efforts by the RCMP and allows them to focus on more serious crime issues in the communities they serve."

The Sheriff Highway Patrol was introduced in September 2006. Since then, they have issued more than 28,000 tickets for traffic violations, attended nearly 200 collisions, taken more than 100 suspected impaired drivers off the road and responded to more than 100 traffic service requests from the public.

The additional Sheriffs are part of the 42 positions announced in Budget 2007 at a cost of \$7.5 million. Sheriffs are posted in Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray.

"Traffic safety is my department's top priority and these additional sheriff positions will go a long way towards achieving that goal," said Luke Ouellette, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "As road travel increases significantly during summer months so does the importance of making every effort to keep our roads safe for Albertans."

Albertans are encouraged to let the Sheriffs know about traffic enforcement concerns such as speeders or aggressive drivers on our highways. They can do this online at www.sheriffs.gov.ab.ca (click on Sheriff Highway Patrol) or by calling toll-free 1-866-922-3389.

Traffic safety is a key part of Premier Ed Stelmach's plan to provide safe and secure communities. Other priorities for the government are to govern with integrity and transparency, manage growth pressures, improve Albertans' quality of life and build a stronger Alberta.

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Editors note:

Backgrounder provides local contacts and distribution of the 24 officers.

Media enquiries may be directed to:

Jill McCormick
Communications, Solicitor General and Public Security
(780) 427-2153
(780) 719-5794 - cell

To call toll-free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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Alberta Sheriff Highway Patrol

Region	New Sheriffs	Total	Contact
Calgary	4	17	Sgt. Rick Gardner (403) 297-8355
Edmonton	5	19	Acting Sgt. Ryan Ruzycki (780) 644-3046
Fort McMurray	5	10	Sgt. Mario Fortier (780) 747-6506
Grande Prairie	3	9	Sgt. Brian Belyea (780) 833-4380
Lethbridge	1	8	Sgt. Rudy Desmeules (403) 388-3168
Medicine Hat	2	7	Sgt. Mike Duffy (403) 488-4500
Red Deer	4	14	Sgt. Russ Van Aalst (403) 755-1422 (403) 588-9971 - cell

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