

High number of charges laid in Caledon over Easter weekend

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

Caledon OPP has noticed high volumes of group gatherings and illegal acts along Forks of the Credit in Belfountain, especially this past Easter weekend.

The long weekend saw many visitors from out of town travelling to Caledon to enjoy the scenery, and to take drives on the winding roads. Except, with the COVID-19 pandemic still ongoing, and the provincial and federal governments encouraging people to stay at home whenever possible, now is not the ideal time to be taking such trips.

As the weather gets warmer, many residents from surrounding areas are constantly visiting Caledon, which has caught the attention of locals as well as the OPP.

Caledon OPP Inspector Mike Garant has been providing updates to the Town of Caledon, with online reports of group gatherings, in compliance of social distancing and illegal activity in Caledon, recently making the rounds.

?The situation in Belfountain continues to receive out of town guests, mainly vehicle guests, and our project to target parked vehicles and deter people from being in groups has been working, but people are still very attracted to our trail systems and enclosed parkways and parks,? Inspector Garant states to the Town at the Special Council Meeting on Tuesday (April 14).

Caledon OPP has increased the number of officers it has out in the community to monitor and assist with the situation in Belfountain, as well as tracking social media for tourists. They have requested that local businesses in the area close down their properties and put up signs prohibiting visitors from using their parking lots.

?We also, in our increased presence, have identified more and more of street racer type people? noted Inspector Garant. This past long weekend six vehicles were impounded after police found illegal physical modifications to the cars, and caught individuals speeding and stunt driving.

Several other charges were laid in Belfountain and other areas of Caledon, with tickets distributed for speeding, stunt driving, parking, trespass parking, careless driving, liquor license act and contravention of cannabis.

?There's less people on the roadways. Our officers are now noticing much higher speeds. As a result of that, I've directed all frontline members, not just the traffic enforcement team, to take a more aggressive approach in traffic enforcement in all of Caledon,? explained Inspector Garant.

There was a total of 10 vehicle collisions this past weekend between Friday to Monday, eight of them single vehicle collisions.

?That is a stark number between car versus car, it's cars driving off the roadway on their own. That tells me they're inattentive or they're driving too fast or they're not paying attention. Four of them, were charged with impaired driving,? he said.

Caledon OPP strongly encouraged residents of Caledon to report on any activity in their community that poses as a safety concern. Those including people not complying with social distancing, group gatherings but specifically request to report on if it is happening at the time being, and not something that has happened in the past.

?If you call the non-emergency line, not reporting something that's happening right now, there's not much we can do about it. If you want to report something that happened in the past, do it through online reporting at www.opp.ca/reporting. It's for any public safety concern that doesn't necessitate as a 911 emergency call,? said Garant.

This past weekend, the OPP has partnered with the Ontario Public Health and now have prevention communication centres for officer safety and for public safety. They now have access to a list of local residents who have been ordered to quarantine, as well as test results so the officers who come in contact with other residents are able to determine whether those residents have been tested or not and what the results were.

For more information, or to report a safety concern that is happening right now, please visit opp.ca/reporting.