

Most stunt drivers caught in Caledon are from out of town

By Bill Rea

When it comes to police activity in Caledon, things were somewhat quieter between 2013 and the previous year.

Inspector Tim Melanson, detachment commander of Caledon OPP, recently delivered the regular quarterly report, covering the last three months of 2013 to Caledon council. There were some notable changes in the numbers.

The excessive speed at which some people drive continues to be a concern for the local police. Melanson said there were seven drivers charged in October with going faster than 50 km-h over the posted speed limit. They were all men, and only one of them lives in Caledon. Four men and one woman was charged in November, and one of those people was a Caledon resident. Two men were charged in December.

Melanson told Councillor Doug Beffort enforcement is part of the effort when dealing with that kind of speeding. But he also stressed the fact that a lot of these people are commuters passing through town.

Addressing the statistics for the entire year, Melanson said the total number of occurrences was down in 2013 from 2012 by a little more than four per cent, from 19,295 to 18,474.

There was an increase in the number of sexual assaults reported, from nine to 16, but assaults were down from 165 to 158.

Robberies were also down from six to two and break and enters declined from 113 to 99.

Melanson pointed out the number of impaired drivers dropped from 118 to 99, and three-day licence suspensions was also reduced from 107 to 84. Melanson though the use of programs like HomeJames contributed to those figures.

There was a drop in the number of charges under the Highway Traffic Act, from 21,078 to 18,187, or about 13.7 per cent. He added they plan to increase enforcement in that regard.

The number of complaints through the Roadwatch program also increased from 499 to 602.

The state of commercial motor vehicles using Caledon roads continues to be a concern. The number of hours police devoted to enforcement increased by more than 50 per cent, to 2,258.75 in 2013. There were 2,674 trucks stopped, up from 1,891 the previous year, and Melanson 322 of them were taken out of service, as opposed to 101 in 2012. There was also a substantial increase in the number of cases of defective equipment in the truck inspections, from 222 to 451.

Beffort was also interested in gravel trucks in town, wondering if they are within the required weights. Melanson said police often go to weigh stations as part of traffic management to make sure the load rules are being followed. He added if they're not, those operating the weigh stations can be held accountable too.

Councillor Rob Mezzapelli was pleased to see so many declining numbers. "That's good news," he said.

He also said there have been calls for more of a police presence in the community. Melanson told him the detachment has a specific category for foot and bike patrols, and there will be a definite number of hours devoted to that once the weather improves.

Mayor Marolyn Morrison was concerned about the increase in defective equipment on trucks. "That really bothers me," she told Melanson.

He pointed out three times the number of trucks were pulled off the road.

"That is a definitely not a good thing," he added.

Morrison wondered if the problem was more with independent truckers, as opposed to companies. She said most of the trucking companies using Caledon roads are pretty careful.

Melanson said he would get statistics.