

Project 10-4 looking for speeders this week



Peel Regional Police Constable Gord Middleton and Caledon OPP Constable Ian Michel were looking for speeders Monday morning in Caledon village. Photo by Bill Rea

By Bill Rea

The way some people drive on Highway 10 is a concern for a number of police services, and they have started cracking down, as of Monday.

Representatives of Caledon OPP were on hand in Caledon village Monday morning, braving the rain with officers from Peel Regional Police and Shelburne Police Service to launch Project 10-4. The Owen Sound Police Service is also involved in the program, but they did not have representation at Monday's event.

In police jargon, the term "10-4" means "message understood, received and acknowledged." The name of the program refers to Highway 10 and the four police agencies that patrol the roughly 170 kilometres, from Lake Ontario north into Owen Sound. Caledon OPP Constable Dale Smewing said speed is a big concern. He pointed out that over 2011 and 2012, there were 583 collisions on the OPP-patrolled portion of Highway 10. "A lot of them were speed related," he observed.

They are also on the look-out for other hazardous traffic practices, such as inattentive driving, seatbelt infractions, and impaired driving.

He added that speed is a main focus of the effort. The theory is if the traffic speeds can be reduced, the number of accidents is likely to drop too.

High speeds are a problem on the highway, with numerous drivers going 120 km-h, with others going into the stunt-driving zone. The concerns are spread along the entire stretch of the road.

Shelburne Police Chief Kent Moore said the highway takes in stretches of Main Street and Owen Sound Street in the middle of town, and traffic numbers in that area are high. He said traffic counts taken in 2009 revealed an average of 18,500 trips passing through per day on Main Street, and some 50,000 on weekends.

Constable Paul Neumann observed that most of the collisions in Shelburne are on that stretch.

"We've got a high volume of traffic in our town," the Chief said. "We're hoping with increased police work that it serves as a reminder to motorists to slow down and follow the rules of the road."

The stretch of Highway 10 patrolled by Peel Regional Police is not very long. Inspector Robert Orr said it's only about 29 kilometres, but it's also very busy, with high traffic volumes traversing high and low density residential areas.

"It presents some policing challenges to us," he said.

He said he was hoping this program would generate awareness.

"Everybody's in a hurry," he said, but added speed causes accidents. "If we can educate the public, possibly we don't have to enforce as often as we do."

"This initiative will reinforce the need to educate the public on the dangers of displaying aggressive driving behaviours on our roadways," said Inspector Rose DiMarco, Commander of Caledon OPP. "All police agencies are committed to reducing the number of vehicle collisions, injuries and deaths on our highways and we are pleased to come together with our neighbouring police partners to get the message across."