

Kennebecasis Regional Police Force Chief's Year End Message

As we near the close of another year, I find it fitting to reflect on the remarkable achievements of the dedicated officers and staff of the Kennebecasis Regional Police Force, throughout 2024.

The KRPF is made up of a competent and dedicated team that works tirelessly to ensure the safety and security of the two communities we serve, the towns of Quispamsis and Rothesay. We strive to maintain a high level of professionalism and integrity in all our operations.

After several years in preparatory work, 2024 ushered in the construction of an expansion of approximately 5300 square feet to our existing building. We were proud to be able to award the project tender to Home Star Construction, a home-grown company. The project is nearing completion, and we continue to project that it will come in under budget.

I reported last year about how difficult it had been to recruit new officers and how often we had experienced resource shortages. I am proud to report that we have initiated a new cadet sponsorship program which now allows us to pre-screen applicants and identify successful candidates for a predetermined limited number of seats at the Atlantic Police Academy. The applicants are guaranteed a full-time position upon graduation, and we also assist with the tuition cost. We hired 3 new cadet officers in 2024, and we are about to receive 1 more in January. We are sponsoring 2 more cadets for the first 2025 class at the APA. We will host an information session in January hoping to generate more applications for the second class of 2025. I can say that I am cautiously optimistic that our levels of resources are improving. In all, we saw 13 officers with various past or no police experience, join our ranks since 2022.

KRPF officers have consistently demonstrated proactive efforts in crime prevention and resolution, traffic safety, and fostering community partnerships. Their presence in schools, participation in social programs, community breakfasts, food drives, and mentoring initiatives exemplifies their commitment to the community. Our civilian staff play a crucial role in supporting front-line officers, contributing significantly to public safety in the Kennebecasis Valley.

In 2024, we saw the opening of the KV Oasis Youth and Family center. This project led by Sgt. Kelly McIntyre and Ms. Danielle Lee exemplifies the power of dedicated individuals working towards a common goal. Their strategic approach to addressing complex community issues, particularly those affecting youth and women, has not only aligned with the KRPF's strategic priorities but has also significantly enhanced the organization's credibility within the community. The KV Oasis Center stands as a testament to their commitment, recognized as a model of best practice by peers at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Annual Conference. This acknowledgment from other municipal officials underscores the center's impact and the potential for its programs to serve as a blueprint for similar initiatives. It also allows police officers an option to divert from the justice system young people in need and avoid recidivism.

When it comes to the specialized services the KRPF offers, it is important to highlight the following:

- We have four fully trained Level 4 Traffic Collision Reconstruction experts.
- Our fleet of drones can be deployed in various environments, whether inside tight surroundings or outside in inclement weather. We have four officers who are trained pilots.
- Our in-house IT specialist completed the Computer Forensic Examiner (CMPFOR) at the Canadian Police College, which is highly specialized training. This expertise recently proved invaluable in guiding investigators during an unusual and complex investigation, saving countless hours of potentially futile and costly efforts.
- We recently acquired a new tool. The ARWEN ACE 37mm is an extended range impact weapon that serves to incapacitate a dangerous suspect, with limited injury.
- Our K9 Unit, with police dog Sammy and Cst. Chris McLeod have been busy throughout 2024. Just recently, they were successful in tracking and eventually find an elderly man in need of assistance in snowy weather, potentially saving his life.
- In the intricate work of law enforcement, the forensic identification officer's role is often unsung, yet it is one of the most pivotal. Behind the scenes, these dedicated professionals apply their meticulous expertise to

unravel the silent stories told by evidence. We have one full-time experienced Forensic Identification Services officer, with a second officer having recently completed the same six-week training at the Canadian Police College.

An in-depth review of our traffic enforcement program was conducted, leading to the development of a new plan for 2025. This comprehensive review highlighted areas for improvement and allowed us to strategically reallocate our resources. As a result, we will be able to implement more focused enforcement during peak traffic times, ensuring a greater presence where and when it is most needed. Additionally, this reallocation will enable us to dedicate more time to educational initiatives, promoting safer driving habits and increasing public awareness about traffic safety. We also have added E-Bikes to our fleet of vehicles. Their use will allow us to focus on cycling issues as well as other traffic and patrol demands.

In 2024, our strategic plan continued to guide our priorities in Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Employee Engagement and Well-Being, Excellence in Investigations, and Crime Reduction. We are proud to report that we have successfully met the majority of our goals this year. I must highlight the work initiated by Inspector Anika Becker in collaboration with Mr. Mohamed Bagha of the Saint John Newcomers Center and Professor Bob Whitney of UNB to develop an anti racism strategy in policing. A strategic plan has been developed and will be operationalised in 2025.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated Criminal Investigation Division composed of highly trained detectives who handle our more complex cases. As Chief of Police, I am reassured by their collective expertise, which translates into professional and competent investigations.

Additionally, we have officers dedicated full-time to the Saint John Integrated Enforcement Unit, focusing on street-level drugs and other types of investigations in Saint John and the Kennebecasis Valley. The IEU has been extremely successful in their efforts to remove harmful drugs such as meth and fentanyl, and those who traffic those harmful substances.

I recently received the crime rate data for year 2023 from Statistic Canada. We fared very well again, with one of the lowest crime rates in Canada and the lowest in New Brunswick. This is something our two communities can continue to be proud of. That said, hard drugs are in the KV, and with that comes an increase in property crime, crimes of opportunity. This can be prevented by being vigilant

and by taking the time to put in practice preventive measures at home and with your vehicles. Police and the community members we serve have a shared responsibility in preventing crime.

The new processes we put in place in 2024 to increase our internal capacity in how we manage our finances has paid off significantly. The funding of our yearly budget comes from the local taxpayers, and that is why we prioritize finding fiscal efficiencies and ensuring that every dollar is spent wisely to maximize the benefits for our community. We are proud that the funding required by the two municipalities to feed our budget for year 2025 only needed to increase by 1.3% from 2024.

It is important to note that we now have a new five-year contract with our Unionized officers. This will bring stability within our organization. The agreement is one that respects the rights to collective bargaining and fairness to our officers. It also recognised the need for fiscal prudence and respect to the community we serve.

In November 2024, the KRPF held our annual awards and recognition ceremony. During this event, we proudly announced the promotions of 3 new sergeants and 5 new corporals. Several awards were presented to officers, civilian staff, and to one brave young woman from our community. Earlier in the year, we promoted a new Deputy Chief and 1 new Inspector.

I must take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to our front-line officers and staff for their unwavering dedication to our community policing model and public safety. The KRPF officers understand that it is not only about being safe, but also about feeling safe. Visibility, presence, and interaction with the community are of utmost importance.

In 2024, our police senior management team, composed of Deputy Chief Mary Henderson, Inspector Anika Becker (Patrol and Traffic Divisions), Inspector Colin Flynn (CID, Support Services) has exemplified the highest standards of dedication, competence, and care. Their unwavering commitment to our community's safety and well-being has been truly inspiring. They have consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership, guiding our officers with integrity and professionalism.

The Kennebecasis Joint Regional Board of Police Commissioners plays a crucial role in ensuring effective and accountable policing within our jurisdiction. Our board provide civilian oversight and governance, helping to bridge the gap between the police force and the community. There are 9 volunteer members serving on the Joint Regional Board (2 elected officials from each community, 2 citizens from each community, and one government appointee). They are responsible, along with the police chief for setting strategic priorities, approving budgets, and establishing policies that guide the police force's operations. By promoting transparency and accountability, our board ensures that the KRPF is aligned with community needs and expectations.

Finally, on behalf of all the staff at the KRPF, I express my gratitude to the residents of Quispamsis and Rothesay, our Mayors and Councils and Town CAOs for their support and cooperation. Together, we can continue to make our communities a safer and better place to live.

Together, we will continue to keep the KV safe!



Steve Gourdeau, Chief

Kennebecasis Regional Police Force

