

Outcomes of Bonnyville RCMP Community Engagement 2020

As per the 2020 Bonnyville Community Engagement initiative which was open to all residents from town of Bonnyville, MD of Bonnyville, Village of Glendon, Fort Kent, La Corey, Iron River, Therien and Kehewin Cree Nation.

This initiative was open to submissions between the dates of Monday June 29, 2020, and Friday July 10, 2020. It was developed to provide a forum where residents could bring forth any of their policing concerns to the Detachment Commander and have their concerns published along with the corresponding responses and/or action plans to address the issues, if applicable.

Following the deadline for submissions, I received several responses from community members, many of whom shared the same common concerns. I've summarized them below.

Concern #1:

Request for increased patrols and visibility in the town of Bonnyville specifically the areas of 51st Street, Lakeshore Drive, 51st Avenue and 43rd Avenue. Specific concerns in these areas include speeding, stunting, racing and loud vehicles. Stop sign violations and littering are also noted issues in these locations.

Answer #1:

Speeding vehicles is a common concern in these areas and the members of the Bonnyville Detachment like nothing better than to catch a driver who is speeding or stunting in the act and have a discussion with the driver about slowing down. Just because you may not see us doesn't mean we haven't been patrolling that area. We do conduct regular patrols in these areas both day and night but for obvious reasons motorists are far more compliant when there's a police car cruising around. While crimes and traffic offences are committed when members are not at a particular location, it should be noted that when members are on patrol at a particular location it potentially prevents a crime and traffic offences from taking place. There is no way to know how many criminal and traffic offences have been prevented as a result of these proactive patrols.

It should be noted that a police officer can issue a violation ticket to a driver without ever having witnessed the offence. If a witness observes the offence such as stunting or a Stop sign violation for example AND they are able to either jot down the licence plate or identify the driver, that driver can be issued a ticket. Licence plates can be like gold for police officers conducting investigations as it's a method to track down who the registered owner is and furthermore who the driver may have been at the time of the alleged offence.



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Perhaps the following fine amounts will cause regular offenders to think twice:

- Cause Loud Unnecessary Noise with a Motor Vehicle - \$162.
- Stunting - \$567.
- Distracted Driving - \$300.
- Stop Sign Violation - \$405.
- Speeding – Varies depending on how many km/hr over the limit IE: \$110 for 10 km/hr over and \$495 for 50 km/hr over the limit.
- All of these offences are accompanied by anywhere from two to six demerit points.

Concern #2:

Response times.

Answer #2:

While the Bonnyville RCMP are on shift 24/7, the members of the Bonnyville RCMP are responsible for a geographical area that spans over several hundred kilometres and cannot be in all places at once. A typical shift is comprised of reactionary patrols as a result of being dispatched to a particular location as well as proactive patrols. Sometimes by the luck of the draw we happen to be conducting a proactive patrol 'in the right place at the right time' and our response time may be very short. On the flip side of that we can sometimes be dealing with a situation at one end of our patrol area and a call for service comes in at the other end. Unfortunately our response times in these situations is naturally going to take longer.

Concern #3:

Request for increased patrols and visibility in the Village of Glendon.

Answer #3:

Patrols are conducted in Glendon every day/night, by way of police officers responding to specific calls but mostly proactively patrolling. The members of the Bonnyville Detachment are out patrolling the rural villages and hamlets as much as they are in the town of Bonnyville. Their time is spread out to cover all areas within the Bonnyville Detachment's jurisdiction. If we don't encounter something in Glendon that causes us to pull over a vehicle making the police vehicle's presence more obvious, it's quite possible you may not see the daily/nightly patrols, but trust me they are happening consistently. And if there is a specific situation in which you would like a police officer to attend please do not hesitate to call (780-826-3358).

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Concern #4:

The intersection on Highway 28 at Fort Kent when traffic is turning North into Fort Kent or South onto Highway 657 is not safe. There is concern that some motorists are using the turn lanes to pass on the inside. One concerned resident commented on the lack of police presence at that intersection and asked: *“Who would be at fault if someone heading East turned north into Fort Kent, while a west bound vehicle was waiting to turn south, and was struck by someone heading West who decided to use the turning lane as a straight away?”*

Answer #4:

The intersections at Fort Kent and Ardmore are commonly a topic of discussion and debate. Unfortunately, the turn lane is in different spots at these two intersections causing further confusion. At Fort Kent, there is an Eastbound left turn lane located in the middle up against the centre line while in Ardmore there's a right turn lane located to the right up against the shoulder line.

The short answer is that the motorist using the turn lane as a straight away whether it be at the Fort Kent intersection or the Ardmore intersection would be at fault and subject to a \$243 fine.

At the Fort Kent intersection if the vehicle in front of you is slowing down and turning right, you must remain behind that vehicle and wait for it to turn even if it means slowing down. If you opt to travel straight through in the left turn lane, oncoming traffic turning left may do so right in front of you resulting in t-bone collision as you would be indicating that you too are turning left causing them to think it's safe to turn left.

At the Ardmore intersection, if a vehicle in front of you is turning left, you must remain behind that vehicle even if it means coming to a stop to wait for that motorist to safely turn left and free up your driving lane. The lanes on the right (both Eastbound and Westbound) are only for right turning vehicles coming into and out of that intersection.

Any changes to the Fort Kent or Ardmore intersection would have to be examined by Alberta Transportation who have advised they are well aware of the concerns surrounding those intersections. They advised there have been studies conducted resulting in a determination that no changes are necessary as their records don't indicate that either intersection is a particularly dangerous.

That being said, I acknowledge that when I pass by Fort Kent and Ardmore I always pay a little extra attention as I too have seen motorists using the turning lane to pass. I agree the police presence could be stronger and have arranged for increased monitoring of the Fort Kent



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intersection by way of patrols and stationary observation by Bonnyville Detachment members. Anyone witnessing a traffic infraction at this intersection is encouraged to note the licence plate of the offending vehicle (if possible) and call us (780-826-3358).

Concern #5:

Rural property crime and thefts.

Answer #5:

While rural crime is always on our radar I am pleased to report that there has been a decrease in these types of crimes. Since January there has been a 36% decrease in Break & Enters in the MD and a 5% decrease in town, a 21% decrease in motor vehicle thefts in the MD and a 43% decrease in town and a 32% decrease in thefts under \$5000 in the MD and a 23% decrease in town.

While the RCMP will pursue all investigational avenues in a rural property investigation, preventing rural crime starts with the property owner. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is one way a property owner can legally take matters into their own hands. I highly recommend checking out this link to the RCMP's CPTED YouTube playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcKXZtPXANcruAdyWOrXnHqQ3DdG_hcd7

Rural crimes can go unreported for various reasons. If the RCMP are unaware of a crime they cannot investigate it. I always encourage community members to never hesitate to call the RCMP to report a property crime or theft, no matter how trivial the situation may seem. There is also a new online reporting system available to the public that was designed to streamline the reporting process for certain types of crimes and circumstances. The link for online crime reporting is <https://ocre-sielc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/alberta/en> and you can use it if: You have lost something that costs less than \$5000. Someone has stolen something from you that costs less than \$5000. Someone has vandalized your property or vehicle and it will cost less than \$5000 to repair it. The crime happened within the jurisdiction of the Alberta RCMP.

Concern #6:

Impaired Driving

Answer #6:

Bonnyville Detachment members are always on the hunt for impaired drivers. They are a danger to everyone else on our highways and roadways. What makes it all the more frustrating is that it is completely 100% preventable. The new Mandatory Alcohol Screening measures

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have helped RCMP in their efforts to catch and charge impaired drivers but it just doesn't sink in for some motorists who continue to choose to drive impaired. During our regular patrols we are always alert to signs of an impaired driver. In addition to vehicle patrols you may have seen us conducting regular walk-throughs in local licenced establishments. This is done in an effort to remind patrons that we are out and about and to encourage them to use a designated driver, or cab or walk if they've been drinking. As always, if you see someone you suspect is driving impaired, pull over and call 911.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in this 'Virtual Town Hall'. If I didn't respond to your letter or email in this article, I will still respond to your concern individually as time permits. I would also like to acknowledge the several responses that came in just to thank the members of the Bonnyville Detachment. Without the support of our communities, the RCMP cannot do what we do.

I hope this 'virtual Town Hall' of sorts was beneficial to the community we serve and I look forward to doing this or something similar again early in the New Year.

Regards,

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