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Traffic Safety - An equal priority - A shared responsibility

ORILLIA, ON - "In the hands of an irresponsible person, a motor vehicle is no less dangerous than a loaded firearm in the hands of an equally irresponsible individual. In reality, the potential trauma is tragically similar and the consequences equally unacceptable," says Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Commissioner Julian Fantino.

"And yet," he adds, "the public seems to be strangely complacent, passive and even accepting of what is a serious criminal public safety threat."

Too often, traffic safety initiatives take a back seat to what are perceived as more important public safety issues and concerns, such as gun and gang violence, the threat of terrorism, organized crime and more. "All are legitimate law enforcement priorities and on balance, traffic safety must be included as an equal priority," he says.

The leading criminal cause of death in Canada is alcohol and drug induced impaired driving, not murder. Eighty percent of all vehicle crashes are caused occurrences, not accidents and

virtually all are preventable. Vehicle crashes cost approximately \$10 billion annually in Ontario and result in untold trauma and anguish from the loss of life and the short and long term consequences of injuries.

Commissioner Fantino is especially concerned about the unabated impaired driving revealed during this year's five-week, OPP Festive RIDE (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) program. In all OPP jurisdictions throughout Ontario, officers ramped up their efforts to detect and apprehend impaired drivers, checking more than 800,000 vehicles, compared to almost 577,000 in 2005.

More than 800, 12-hour licence suspensions were issued and 339 persons charged with alcohol related Criminal Code driving offences. In the same period last year, 671, 12 hour licence suspensions were issued and 278 persons were charged with impaired driving.

During the same five-week period this year, 43 people died in traffic collisions in OPP policed jurisdictions

and many more injured in over 1,730 personal injury collisions. In all, OPP officers attended more than 11,500 motor vehicle collisions, up substantially from the same period last year.

"Alcohol and drug induced impaired drivers continue to be an extremely aggravating public safety menace that must be tackled with the same vigour, commitment, dedication and resources expended on other serious criminal public safety threats," says Fantino.

"Of all the things we can't prevent, traffic safety in all of its many dynamics is the one thing where, but for the human condition, prevention is not only available to us, it is absolutely in our control.

"It's time to make traffic safety a public safety priority and to deal with it as a shared public responsibility among the public, the police and the judicial system," he concludes.

Go to www.opp.ca for a full text of Commissioner Julian Fantino's Open Letter to the Citizens of Ontario entitled: Traffic Safety: A Shared

E-Bay helps OPP solve snowboard theft

(Oro-Medonte) Barrie OPP have solved a theft of snowboards from Mt. St. Louis resort that occurred on December 30th, utilizing the assistance of E-Bay Security.

The theft victim went onto E-Bay following the theft and noticed her snowboard for sale on the site. She contacted the Barrie OPP and advised them of this. The Barrie OPP contacted E-Bay security and with their assistance determined the location of the snowboard. Two 17 year old males from Richmond Hill were arrested and charged with Possession of Stolen Property and released on an appearance notice.

Fail to remain - Pedestrian and Vehicle Collision

(Essa) On Sunday, January 7th at approximately 6:30 pm, a 19 year old female from Angus was crossing the road at Commerce Road in the Town of Angus. As the pedestrian was crossing the road, a newer white 4 door vehicle struck her. The vehicle has turned from Mill Street onto Commerce Road.

The pedestrian sustained injuries to her left arm and ankle. The vehicle initially stopped and the pedestrian and female driver had a conversation. At first, it was agreed that the female driver of the white vehicle was going to provide her information, but as the pedestrian got to her feet, the driver left the scene, going toward Brentwood.

The pedestrian was unable to get a license plate number. The female driver is described as white, early 40's, shoulder length white hair, glasses. Damage may have been sustained to the driver's side mirror. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Nottawasaga OPP at (905) 729-4004 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.

Three vehicle collision closes southbound Hwy. 11

(Oro Medonte) A three vehicle collision that occurred shortly after noon on Thursday on Hwy. 11 at Line 15 of Oro-Medonte resulted in both s/b lanes and one n/b lane being closed.

A Grey Lincoln LS was entering Hwy. 11 from the s/b ramp from Line 15, this vehicle drove directly into the Hwy. 11 s/b lane without using the merge lane, onto the Hwy, as a result, it contacted with a 1992 Toyota in the right rear corner, causing minimal damage. A s/b loaded gravel truck which was immediately behind the Toyota braked heavily and swerved to the left, but was unable to avoid the Lincoln and contacted it in the rear. The gravel truck went on its side and struck the centre median, spilling its contents onto the Hwy. No injuries were reported. The driver of the Lincoln, Samuel Charles Merritt, 19, of Barrie is charged with Careless Driving.

SIU investigating Alliston man's death

The Provincial Special Investigations Unit (SIU) has closed an investigation into the death of a 56-year-old Alliston man. Three Nottawasaga OPP officers assisted an intoxicated man found walking in Alliston on Thursday about 7:30 a.m. The man identified himself and provided officers with his address. He was turned over to family members. He was not under arrest and no force was used. About 9:30 a.m., ambulance personnel were called to his home and found the male to absent of vital signs. He was transported to Stevenson Memorial Hospital where he was pronounced dead. Cause of death has not been determined. A post mortem examination on Friday at the Centre of Forensic Sciences in Toronto showed no signs of physical trauma.

South Simcoe Police

Breach of Probation/Fail to Comply with Undertaking

On January 2, 2007 at approximately 7:40p.m. police received information about a possible fight between three youths in the area of Ferguson St and Huron Crt in the Town of Innisfil. Police located one of the involved youths nearby.

Through investigation it was found that one of the youths was on an officer in charge undertaking with conditions to obtain from the consumption of alcohol from an unrelated criminal charge originating in Peel Region. The male was also on probation. The 17 year old male youth has been charged with Fail to Comply with Undertaking and one count of Breach of Probation, and he is being held in custody pending a bail hearing later this date.

MVC - Canal Road - Bradford West Gwillimbury

On Wednesday January 3, 2007 at approximately 08:30 a.m. a blue 1994 Chev Van was traveling W/B on

Canal Road at Tornado Drive in the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury. The vehicle lost control on a patch of black ice, began to fish tail, ran off the roadway, and entered the canal. The driver, a 55 year old female from Bradford, was able to free herself from the vehicle and make it to shore. Other than being wet and cold, she was not injured. There were no other occupants in the vehicle, and it was completely submerged under water. No charges are expected.

Vehicle Entries

The South Simcoe Police are investigating a rash of vehicle entries that occurred sometime overnight on January 5-6, 2007 in the Town of Innisfil. A number of vehicles were entered, in some cases property was removed, in others the vehicles were rummaged through, but nothing was taken. Police would like to remind citizens to lock their car doors at night and not leave items of value in their vehicles.

Theft of Auto

Police are investigating

the theft of a silver 2005 Dodge Caravan from an Innisfil address sometime overnight on January 5-6, 2007. The vehicle had been left unlocked, and a spare key had been left in the vehicle. The van was recovered later the same date after it was abandoned in a construction site. The vehicle was damaged after having apparently been in an accident at an unknown location.

Mischief to Auto

The South Simcoe Police Service is seeking public assistance in identifying and locating the suspect(s) who vandalized several parked cars at Leo & John's Car and Truck Sales in Bradford sometime Saturday night or early Sunday morning.

Police report the suspect(s) caused damage to several parked cars by walking across the hoods, smashing the windshields and kicking out the side windows. The damage is estimated in excess of \$2,000.00

Anyone with information regarding this occurrence is asked to call South Simcoe Police at 905-775-3311, Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS, or leave an anonymous tip at www.1800222tips.com

Break & Enter

On January 7th, 2007 at approximately 3:30am, South Simcoe Police responded to an alarm call at a business located on the 10th Line of Innisfil. Police arrived on scene within a few minutes and observed a man fleeing from the back of the business.

Police set up containment of the area and called for the assistance of the Canine Unit. Police Service Dog "Ronin" and his handler, Constable Matt Tomlin arrived and began to track the suspect. Within a few minutes, Ronin

had located the male suspect hiding in a neighbours backyard.

He was arrested by police. A search of the man revealed box cutters, pocket tools and a flashlight in his possession. Officers returned to the business and were able to confirm that it had been broken into by the suspect.

A 39 year old Bradford man is facing charges of Break & Enter, Prowl by Night and Possession of Burglar Tools. He will be appearing in Bradford Provincial Court on February 22nd.