Keeping an eye on crime

Foothills: Rural crime watch formed for High River area

By Krista Conrad
Staff Reporter

A recent rash in crime has led rural residents to take action. Led by Const. Stacy Campbell of the High River RCMP, citizens from High River’s surrounding area, including Blackie and Cayley, are banding together to form a new rural crime watch.

Campbell said the upswing in crime is likely correlated to the economic decline and rural residents need to be proactive.

“We want to make people accountable and responsible for their community,” said Campbell. “It’s giving them the power to take back their community.”

The fan-out system will disseminate information from the RCMP to crime watch association members to keep rural residents informed of issues and make them vigilant, she said. Messages may range from crime trends or ongoing issues to suspicious vehicles and activity seen in the area, she said.

All information will be confirmed and generated from the RCMP and the board and association will manage the crime watch, Campbell said.

The following individuals were nominated to recognize their leadership, dedication to volunteering, and for inspiring the spirit of voluntarism in others.

Leaders of Tomorrow Elementary Award Recipient: Maia Jones
Leaders of Tomorrow Junior High Award Recipient: Emily Pozno
Leaders of Tomorrow Senior High Award Recipient: Gabby Gibbs

Heart of Okotoks Award Recipient: Meg Cus

MD of Foothills Councillor Ted Mills at the gate to his property on Apr. 7. Mills encountered an alleged car thief on his property when the individual approached him asking to put air in his tires.

Two general meetings have been held so far, including one information session with High County Rural Crime Watch Association president Suzanne Oel and about 100 people came out.

“I think that’s a good start, but I’d like to see 10 times that number of people joining the association,” said Campbell.

Joining the association involves completing an application form and having a basic criminal record check done, she said. Campbell hopes to have the board up and running by the end of June, so the crime watch can get started over the summer.

Board members are required to attend regular meetings, general association meetings do not have the same stipulation, but will receive fan-outs and information when issues arise, she said.

“Though the RCMP will endeavour to use the fan-out in all cases, Campbell said sometimes events unfold too quickly for the crime watch to effectively warn everyone – like in the case of the machete-wielding truck thief in the Mazeppa area on April 1.

“If the members have the ability to send messages, in a situation like that, they could potentially put out to people to stay in their houses, but that one happened so fast I’m not sure it would have been effective in this case,” said Campbell.

See Crime on page 7
Buy a set of four selected tires for the price of three from March 14 to April 23, 2016. See in-store for complete details. Offers applicable on our Every Day Pricing (EDP) and valid only with a minimum purchase of four (4) identical tires in one transaction. Not valid for Goodyear National Accounts or Fountain Tire Elite Accounts. Inventory may vary by location. All applicable taxes (i.e.: GST, PST, HST and tire taxes) are extra. ®™ Trademarks of AIR MILES International Trading B.V. Used under license by LoyaltyOne Inc., and Goodyear Canada Inc.

Fountain Tire is licensed by AMVIC in Alberta.

Fountain Tire Okotoks
403-938-3505
180 N Railway St, Okotoks

$524,900

• 2,410 SF – 3 bed, 2.5 bath
• Quartz countertops
• Walk-thru pantry
• Upper bonus room and laundry

Call Jane or Jozee
403-938-2504

$498,900

• 2,061 SF – 3 bed, 2.5 bath
• Upper bonus room and laundry
• $3,000 blind allowance
• $5,000 landscaping allowance

Call Corey
403-919-9193

$512,000

• 2,377 SF – 4 bed, 2.5 bath
• Spectacular kitchen with oversized island
• 2" faux wood blinds included
• Impressive appliance package

Call Yolande
403-995-7061

Visit a show home today! Take Milligan Drive East to Drake Landing Blvd. | DRAKEUNITED.COM

Crimes, from page 4

MD Coun. Ted Mills, a Blackie-area resident, was approached by the suspect before incident that led to a police pursuit, and said with a crime watch he could have warned more people in the area.

“It’s dangerous when you’ve got these guys running around out here looking for trouble,” said Mills. “They could have a gun, they could be on something, they’re unpredictable and people need to be vigilant and be careful out here.”

While he worked in his shop, he said he heard a truck driving erratically on gravel roads and revving its engine before it entered his yard and parked outside his shop.

The driver insisted he needed air for his tires, but Mills refused and told him to get off his property. From there, the suspect went to the neighbour’s house and stole a truck, he said, beginning the series of events that ultimately led to him smashing through rural gates and standing in another yard with a machete.

Mills phoned police with the license plate number, but said it would have been even better to also be able to warn area residents, since nobody knew where the suspect was driving or how the incident would end.

“With everything that’s been happening lately, we are more vigilant about what’s going on here now,” said Mills. “We’re not just laidback, we’re paying attention. People need to be aware, and make sure they have gates and they’re being proactive and sign up for the rural crime watch to tighten it up.”

The next meeting for the rural crime watch will be held April 25 at 7 p.m. at the Blackie Community Hall. Anyone interested in being a board member is welcome to attend.

Those interested in joining the crime watch as a member can contact Sgt. Campbell at the High River RCMP at 403-652-2357.

Incidents for the week of April 4 to April 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEOPHGRAPHIC AREA</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break In</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collision</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impaired</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Statistics are Monday through Sunday inclusive
2. Areas T1, T2, T3 & T4 are wholly within the Okotoks town limits
3. Area T5 is rural

Anyone with information about mischief, vandalism or any other crime in the community is encouraged to contact the Okotoks RCMP or Crimestoppers. Please call the Okotoks RCMP at (403) 995-6400 or Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (1-800 222-8477).