

Three Alberta Municipalities Launch Software to Tackle Crime in Region

Crime coalition activates new communication system on Oct 15 to take a proactive approach to crime

Barrhead, AB - October 10, 2018 - Barrhead & Area Regional Crime Coalition (B.A.R.C.C.), announced the launch of *B.A.R.C.C. Connect* in response to the increase of crime in the area – a system, which notifies registrants, in real-time, of essential alerts in the region.

This regional communication system is the first of its kind, as different agencies have joined forces to take a proactive approach to crime - a problem residents have been looking to local government to resolve. The automated system, which delivers messages to registrants by way of voice calls, text messages, and e-mail, has been developed to notify citizens of criminal activity, emergency situations, fire bans, road closures, and service interruptions. This system will provide residents with several options to stay up-to-date, in real time, with accurate information from the local RCMP as well as municipal partners. As Woodlands Councilor, Dale McQueen, stated, "Rural communities have been hit hard with thefts in recent years, and now they will have a tool to turn that trend around. With multiple ways of sending information to the public, this is the fastest and most accurate means of informing our residents of situations arising in their area." The sentiment was mirrored by Jan VanRoodselaar, Chair of Barrhead & District Rural Crime Watch who stated: "Our primary objective is to deliver a quality system capable of reaching members quickly."

As rural crime does not recognize municipal boundaries, partners in B.A.R.C.C. understand that collaborating on this initiative is key when trying to reduce criminal activities, possibly involving the same culprits over a broader region. Cooperating on communicating and engaging the public, in real-time, is one tactic that benefits both enforcement and the public. Doug Drozd, Reeve for County of Barrhead and B.A.R.C.C. Chair, stated, "It's time to be proactive in dealing with crime. This tool gives registrants a direct connection to the RCMP and partnering municipalities, providing residents with accurate and relevant information. With increased awareness we hope to deter criminal behaviour to ensure our community is not an easy target." VanRoodselaar also stated that "together we are stronger."

Town of Barrhead Mayor, Dave McKenzie, had this to say, "This system will greatly enhance the flow of information to our residents and help local enforcement. This is only the first step in helping the community address the crime in our region. This new system increases awareness and creates initiatives to reduce crime."

ABOUT B.A.R.C.C.

B.A.R.C.C. is a regional partnership between the County of Barrhead, the Town of Barrhead Woodlands County, the RCMP and Barrhead & District Rural Crime Watch Association to address crime. The purpose of the coalition is to take a collaborative approach to make our communities safer. Through coordinated efforts in education and awareness of crime prevention and reporting suspicious activities, B.A.R.C.C. is taking an active role in reducing crime.

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