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NEWS

Deficiencies were fixed, says top cop

Inspector Jim Wakely of the Ridge Meadows RCMP reports that, contrary to a recent Vancouver Sun article, his detachment no longer needs major work to improve deficiencies in operations, procedures and policy.

An article in the Vancouver Sun on Monday reported Ridge Meadows was one of several Lower Mainland RCMP detachments that needs improvement.

The Sun reported that Vancouver RCMP Cpl. Tom Seaman said detachments are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure proper "service delivery" to the public.

"Any time an area in those reports is lacking, needs to be improved upon or isn't following force policy, there are changes made to improve that service or function," he said.

Detachment commanders are high-level managers who have staff constantly monitoring the quality of policing operations and looking for areas that need improvement, Seaman said.

In information obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, the Sun revealed that in a 2003 Risk Review Report, Ridge Meadows received a ranking of "needs improvement" in four out of five categories: quality assurance, exhibit systems integrity, internal investigations and cell block procedures. Only violence in relationships received a "satisfactory" ranking.

The memo that accompanied the report did, however, state "...it was quite clear during our visit that you have been working diligently towards maintaining and enhancing relationships inside and outside of the organization." The memo, dated July 2003, also indicated the detachment had already taken steps toward addressing some of the issues raised in the report.

"The review they (the Sun) are reporting on is three years old," commented Insp. Wakely. "All of these issues have been resolved."

Wakely was not the officer in charge of the Ridge Meadows detachment when the review was done in 2003, but he informed the TIMES that none of the three issues mentioned in the article are a problem now.

"The unauthorized restraining device is long gone and there have been bilingual signs in our cells for as long as I can remember," he stated.

According to Wakely, the detachment also takes part in yearly local internal reviews. The purpose of these reviews is to assess quality of service in high-risk areas.

Each year, six or seven areas are chosen for review - the exhibit system was reviewed last year and Wakely is satisfied all the issues raised in the 2003 review have been addressed.

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