



SEASONS GREETINGS

Alberta Citizens On Patrol Association 2024 Holiday Newsletter

December 2024

Alberta Citizens On Patrol Association

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Message from the President

T'was the night before Christmas and all through the town,
C.O.P. members were driving around.

- Checking on business places, garages, homes, and yards.
- Good volunteers, never letting down their guard.
- Aiding the RCMP to keep all the "grinches" at bay.
- Helping their community to have a happy holiday!

Thanks to Caroyln Kohlsmith for her enlightened poetry!

Thank you all for everything that you have done and continue to do for your communities. Your time and your efforts do not go unnoticed and are greatly valued and appreciated. I hope that you are able to sit back and enjoy some special time and create new memories with your family and friends this holiday season. I look forward to everything that 2025 has in store for all of us. Here's looking to see where the New Year can bring Alberta Citizens On Patrol and all of the groups that make up our association in our wonderful province.

A special thank you to the Alberta RCMP and all of the law-enforcement agencies who have worked with us this year with our various Citizens on Patrol groups throughout the province.

Merry Christmas
Seasons Greetings
Happy Hanukkah
Happy Kwanzaa

Kimberly Hurst
President ACOPA

Have a story or an idea for our newsletter????? We'd love to hear from you!!! Email newsletter@acopa.ca.



Crime Prevention Tips for the Holiday Season

Mail / Packages

With the holiday season, typically an increase of break and enters to mailboxes occurs. Some tips to protect your packages include:

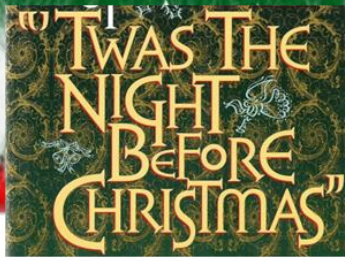
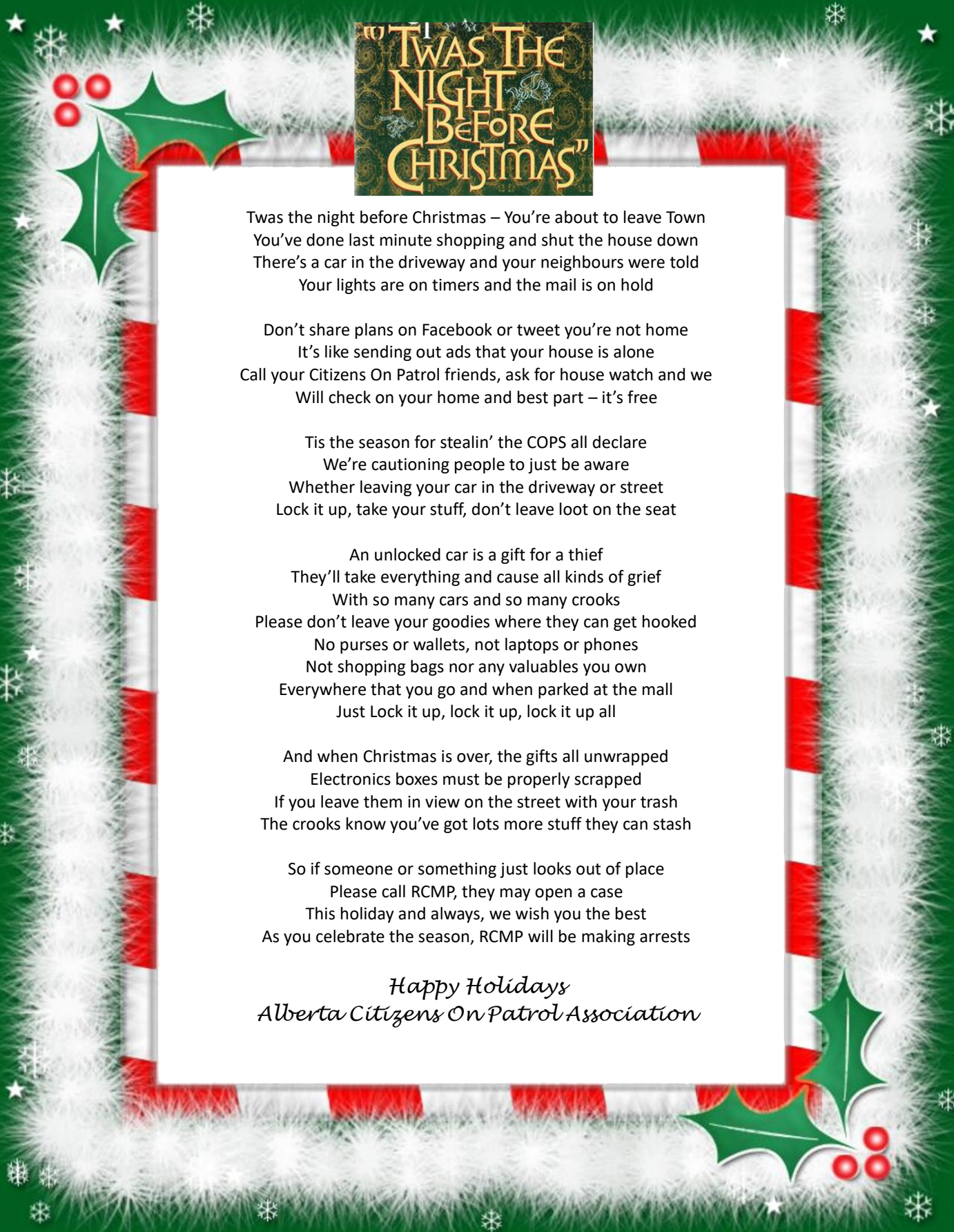
- Ensure that mail is collected every day from your mailbox. If there is never any mail in the mailboxes, then there isn't mail to steal.
- This is also the season of porch pirates, so for deliveries always:
 - i. Select "flex delivery" so that packages can be left in places that are not so visible if they are not able to be home during for the Using the delivery service's tracking app (if available)
 - ii. Have the package sent to your local postal outlet to be picked up from there?
 - iii. Make arrangement to have a family member, friend, or neighbor be available to collect the package for you if it has to be delivered to your residence.
 - iv. Use AMAZON collection boxes if available in your area.
- If there is a break into the mailboxes or postal outlets, report the incident to police in a timely manner.

Automobile

- Be sure to lock your vehicle whether you are parking in your driveway, on the street, at the mall, or even at your workplace.
- Keep your valuables out of site, Thieves will be checking parked cars, and they will most likely enter or break into vehicles when they see valuables or gifts in plain sight.
- #LockItOrLoselt
- Don't leaving your vehicle running and unattended.
- Use a steering wheel Locking device (ie the "Club") or similar for an added layer of security.
- Keep your key FOB and garage door opens secure and away from easy access.

Home

- Do not post on social media that you are going away and avoid posting vacation photos until you have returned home.
- Avoid being obvious when packing your car for a vacation.
- Set a timer to switch various household lights on at night and off in the morning. If you frost or cover your garage windows, burglars won't be able to tell if your car is gone.
- Make sure that all possible entrances to your house are locked properly.
- Use a metal bar or piece of wood on sliding doors and windows to make prying them open difficult.
- Leave a key for your home with someone you trust.
- Make sure trusted neighbours know you are going away and are left with an emergency contact number.
- In general, with the help of friends and neighbours try to avoid the appearance that no one is home. This could be done by:
 - Having a neighbour complete yard maintenance including:
 - Shoveling your sidewalk and driveway while you are away if it snows.
 - Collecting mail and packages
 - Parking a car in the driveway
 - Put your newspaper and deliveries on hold.
- When setting up seasonal displays in your yard, make sure sightlines are maintained and providing hiding areas for unwanted behaviour.
- Contact your alarm company and advise them when you will be away.
- Don't put your Christmas tree close to a window as it potentially makes it easy for smash and grab.
- Do not put "Big" Ticketed packaging boxes out on trash day as it potentially attracts



"Twas the
NIGHT
Before
CHRISTMAS"

Twas the night before Christmas – You're about to leave Town
You've done last minute shopping and shut the house down
There's a car in the driveway and your neighbours were told
Your lights are on timers and the mail is on hold

Don't share plans on Facebook or tweet you're not home
It's like sending out ads that your house is alone
Call your Citizens On Patrol friends, ask for house watch and we
Will check on your home and best part – it's free

Tis the season for stealin' the COPS all declare
We're cautioning people to just be aware
Whether leaving your car in the driveway or street
Lock it up, take your stuff, don't leave loot on the seat

An unlocked car is a gift for a thief
They'll take everything and cause all kinds of grief
With so many cars and so many crooks
Please don't leave your goodies where they can get hooked
No purses or wallets, not laptops or phones
Not shopping bags nor any valuables you own
Everywhere that you go and when parked at the mall
Just Lock it up, lock it up, lock it up all

And when Christmas is over, the gifts all unwrapped
Electronics boxes must be properly scrapped
If you leave them in view on the street with your trash
The crooks know you've got lots more stuff they can stash

So if someone or something just looks out of place
Please call RCMP, they may open a case
This holiday and always, we wish you the best
As you celebrate the season, RCMP will be making arrests

Happy Holidays
Alberta Citizens On Patrol Association

ACOPA GRANT APPLICATION

As most of you are aware, ACOPA received a sizable grant from the government of Alberta in order to promote the Citizens On Patrol Program. For the next three years, ACOPA will receive \$113,000 to be spent on promoting the Citizens On Patrol program.

We are encouraging C.O.P. groups to hold community events to get our name out there, our purpose and to assist with recruitment. These promotional events will be paid for solely with grant money and no cost will be incurred by the groups. Simply review the criteria for the grant and submit your application. Applications must be approved before the event can proceed.

ACOPA asks for a couple photos of the event along with a brief writeup that states the success of the event including some statistics that can be shared with the government so they know the Citizens On Patrol program is getting promoted.

Grant money can also be used for promotional items such as banners, brochures, decals, table runners, swag such as pens, pads, or clothing items.

If you have any questions, contact your ACOPA Director. Grant criteria and applications can be accessed at the links below.

Groups can submit more than one grant application.

Grant applications are available on the ACOPA website at the following link: [Grant criteria and application](#)



Groups in the News

Strathcona County



Presenting the Alberta Law Enforcement Outstanding Service Award to Constable Chantelle Kelly, Liaison Officer to Strathcona County Citizens On Patrol Society (SCCOPS) is President Val Rusnak, ACOPA webmaster Henry Salomons and ACOPA ID Card volunteer Leonard Boyachyk. Constable Kelly has been an enthusiastic and strong supporter of the Citizens on Patrol program in Strathcona County and works with C.O.P. members by attending meetings, arranging for speakers, and keeping the volunteers updated on what is happening in the community.

Also from Strathcona County

On a relatively warm and sunny Saturday afternoon of Oct. 26th, for the second year in a row, the Strathcona County RCMP Community Policing unit sponsored their "Safe Halloween" event at Fire Station #6 next door to the detachment. With the assistance of Enforcement Services, Victim Services, Emergency Services and Citizens On Patrol personnel, several hundred children and their parents were treated to goodie bags and an array of "scary" Halloween characters.

While eight COP members directed traffic to and from the adjacent parking areas, the RCMP “Safety Bear” and the Fire Service’s “Sparky” mascots amused the children; and, on-site police vehicles and a fire truck added to the excitement. Halloween safety themed activity booklets were distributed to all in attendance.

During the course of this three-hour gathering we all enjoyed watching the excitement of the youngsters in their Halloween costumes as they took in this community-oriented event and learned first hand of the “dos-and-don’ts” of their upcoming Halloween outing, where personal safety is always first and foremost.



And then, during Halloween evening proper, a dozen Strathcona County Citizens On Patrol members patrolled six urban and rural neighbourhood zones while thousands of costumed characters went from door to door collecting their treats. Naturally, during our after-patrol get together, there were lots of photos and anecdotes to share following yet another successful Halloween group patrol.



Beaumont



Beaumont held an event on Halloween from 3:30 - 5:30 that was very successful. We handed out candy bags to kids along with Citizens on Patrol pamphlets and a pamphlet on safe Halloweening made up by Shyla Delowski of the Beaumont RCMP. Along with the Beaumont RCMP, the Beaumont Fire Department, Beaumont Bylaw Enforcement, Beaumont Peace Officer and also 8 of our COP's members. (Oh, and the RCMP Safety Bear as well!!)

In total we had 150 bags made up for the kids and we ended up running out by the end of the event. A great event and a super turnout!!



On December 2nd Penhold Citizens on Patrol was joined by Innisfail RCMP, Safe Communities & our neighbouring Innisfail COP group to give a presentation to the local high school students, on the dangers of distracted/impaired driving. The program entails a brief PowerPoint presentation on the dangers of distracted/ impaired driving. We then have 3 stations to move the students through; 1 area set up for field sobriety tests, & 2 closed courses for students to navigate carts while wearing drunk goggles and the other while texting, all under the supervision of our volunteers and our local RCMP. .

We believe experiential learning really does help to “drive” home the message of safety behind the wheel for our youth. This is our 3rd year doing this presentation. 1st year was for the whole school, and now we focus on grade 9 as they are generally new to driving /just getting their learners.

This year we were able to reach 60 students! In total we had 4 Penhold COP members, 5 Innisfail COP members, 2 volunteers from safe communities. (1 of which was Red Deer County Peace Officer), Penhold’s Fire & Protective Services Manager & Constable Nelson from the Innisfail detachment.- Constable Nelson is the liaison assigned to both Penhold & Innisfail high schools.

Since our group shares a detachment with our neighbouring group in Innisfail we thought this could be a great opportunity to partner, possibly expand the program or at the very least, show the group that COP can be versatile in the ways that we reach out into our communities. Between the 2 groups we have 26 hrs logged for volunteering specifically for this event. It definitely helps being our 3rd year, set up was quicker & we already have PowerPoint.

Our story was picked up by several newspapers .

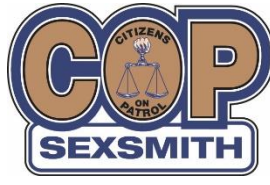
This event was featured on:

Red Deer Advocate: [Red Deer Advocate](#)

Central Alberta Online: [Central Alberta Online](#)

Penhold Facebook: [Penhold Facebook](#)





ACOPA director Beth Endresen (3rd from the left) presented Sexsmith COP members with ACOPA Appreciation Certificates to thank them for their dedication to the organization and the many hours that they have spent patrolling Sexsmith. Pictured left to right are Bryan Gaunt, Len Pelletier, Endresen, Bruce Black, Isak Skjaveland (group founder) and Phil Johnson.

Not pictured are Darcy and Janice Johnson who will receive their certificates as a later date.

INSURANCE

Invoices for insurance payments were sent out this week and are due by January 31, 2025. Please note that there will be no refunds for the 2025 term. Any new group starting up in 2025 will have their insurance pro-rated.

*****NOTE: If your group is able, e-transfers are the preferable method of payment for insurance rather than cheques in the mail. Thank you.**



Successful Fundraiser for Westlock

Saturday November 16, 2024 was a very busy day for Westlock C.O.P. Volunteers. The Legion graciously donated the use of the hall to the group for the day. Westlock hosted a pancake breakfast followed by a ham and turkey bingo. Guests were allowed to take complimentary Westlock calendars that were purchased thanks to the financial aid received from ACOPA. Tie breaker prizes were Westlock C.O.P. coffee mugs, again purchased through grant money received from ACOPA. The group was fortunate to gain financial support from the business community and from individual donations so that expenses for both events were covered and Westlock came out with a tidy profit of just under \$4,000.00. More donations in the form of merchandise prizes enabled the group to sell raffle tickets for 28 prizes in the Lucky Draw Auction and the tickets were sold at the breakfast and at the bingo. The 1,000 tickets printed were sold out. Running three separate events in one day, including a full concession for the bingo, kept Westlock volunteers very busy but the reward was worth it! The group gained quite a few new members in the last while and they feel fortunate for the level of enthusiasm the volunteers have shown. Westlock was pleased to be able to present a fun-filled day to the community and more pleased to have some C.O.P. members from other groups as well as K-Division Liaison Liz Vandaele, in attendance. To "give back" to the community, Westlock will be supporting two Christmas Gift giving programs: one at the Junior/Senior High school and one at the Seniors Lodge as well as providing free hot dogs & hot chocolate after the town's Christmas Light-Up Parade on November 22nd.

Pancake Breakfast



Westlock volunteers Keith & Rolly making delicious pancakes & Sausages



Liz Vandaele (K Division Liaison) came to Westlock for our Pancake Breakfast. The citizens On Patrol group had a very successful fundraiser and Liz enjoyed the pancakes and sausages.



2024 Pancake and Sausage Breakfast hosted by Westlock Citizens On Patrol

BINGO!!!!



These were the prizes available in the raffle



Calendars and coffee mugs printed with ACCOPA grant monies



A great turnout for BINGO

Giving Back

After Westlock hosted two very successful fundraisers, their volunteers voted to "give back" in some way that would encompass a few distinct age groups in the community.

They chose to support the "Christmas Angels" program at the local high school where the staff designate certain students from grades 7 through 12, who are living in disadvantaged situations. This year, they had 102 "stars" on their angel tree displayed at the school office. Two of Westlock volunteers, Stella and Debbie chose 10 of them and went out and got \$25 gifts for each of those students who remain anonymous except to the office staff. The gifts will be given out before the Christmas break!

Giving hope, making a difference and showing that someone cares!!!!



Stella and Debbie are
Picking the students from the
tree to receive a gift.

Our second choice of support was the purchase 10 very full gift bags for 10 senior ladies who live at one of our lodges ...

"The Seniors Wish List" program!

Volunteer members, Michelle and Stella went out shopping and purchased an array of miscellaneous toiletry items plus some sweet treats to fill up the gift bags! Two other volunteer members, Gary and Holly made the delivery to the lodge and were rewarded with so many happy smiles. So many seniors who live there have no family close and some have no family at all, who come to visit, so they really appreciate any and all gestures of kindness and caring!



Gary and Holly delivered the gift bags to the lodge for the "Senior Wish List Program" Holly is in the Picture with a Lodge employee and Gary was taking the Picture.

In summary- Westlock volunteers are feeling happy because the bank balance is looking better than ever and they will be able to host more informative Crime Reduction community events in the New Year. Their hearts are full as well!

** All the best in 2025 to ALL Citizens On Patrol across the province!**

Slave Lake-Parade of Programs

The Slave Lake on Watch Association received ACOPA funding for promotional materials they used at Slave Lake's Parade of Programs that took place September 7th, 2024.

Parade of Programs is an annual event where community non-profit organizations, local clubs, recreation groups, and support services can attend to showcase and promote themselves. It is a free event for the organizations and public to attend.

This year over 300 people attended the Parade of Programs. Of those, many stopped by the Slave Lake on Watch Association booth to discuss crime, crime prevention, and the goals of the group. The association had brochures, stickers, window clings, and applications ready to be handed out. The table runner and signs were also set up to make the booth look attractive and inviting.

There were many conversations between the members of the board that attended and the public. 5 members of the public took applications and out of those 1 is now a fully approved and trained member. It was a wonderful event that promoted the group and ACOPA.





Do you have a member from your group who you feel was helpful and who you really appreciated what they did, why not let everyone know? Simply write into us at newsletter@acopa.ca and tell us a little about the person you want to recognize so that we can all appreciate their efforts. This would be in addition to the recognition certificates presented at the AGM. Don't forget to include a picture!!!

