CCOPA NEWS Winterish 2026

For Citizens On Patrol and Crime Watch Volunteers

This newsletter is written in British Columbia where the sun don't shine (right now) and the clouds don't snow. Thanks for the pictures from some areas and your events writeups. Each of them had an important message from the food bank to starting a program with a First Nation to important training.

CRAM THE CRUISER – THE BATTLEFORDS

By Kenneth Cheung

'We totally beat last year': RCMP collect over 4,200 pounds of food for Battlefords food bank

Dec 7, 2025 | 5:10 AM

On a cold December day in North Battleford, police cruisers, a 33-foot command truck and a steady stream of bundled-up volunteers created a scene that looked less like a law-enforcement operation and more like a holiday barn-raising.

By the time the final boxes were weighed, more than 4,200 pounds of food had been donated on Saturday — a haul valued at over $15,400 using Food Banks Canada's 2025 national valuation method. The food alone surpasses last year's total, which combined food and cash donations at just about $15,000.

Alongside the food collected, there was a little over $3,500 in cash donations, a total that included a $1,000 gift from Eternal Memories Funeral Home.

For the Battlefords District Food & Resource Centre (BDFRC), the surge couldn't have come at a better time.

"This year is amazing. We totally beat last year, which beat the year before," said executive director Erin Katerynych.

"So I am very happy with how the Cram the Cruiser turned out. We've got a lot of food."

Donations fill the Battlefordds RCMP command truck during the Cram the Cruiser food drive in North Battleford on Dec. 6, 2025. (Kenneth Cheung/battlefordsNOW)

The Battlefords RCMP command truck. (Kenneth Cheung/battlefordsNOW)

Katerynych said the donations will go directly toward the food bank and the community's Christmas hamper program. She also praised the RCMP volunteers braving the weather.

"It's December. It's cold outside and they're out there collecting food and raising funds for the Empty Stocking Fund. Absolutely amazing."

The Dec. 6 donations came during the RCMP's fourth annual Cram the Cruiser event, where officers collected food at multiple locations from community members to support the BDFRC.

A different light

For Cpl. Steve Bell, who oversees crime prevention and community policing in the Battlefords, this was his second year organizing the event and easily the biggest turnout he has seen.

"By the quick look of it, it looks like we did better than last year. So, I'm kind of happy with it," he said.

Bell said Cram the Cruiser lets officers connect with residents in a way they rarely can during crisis calls.

"It gets us out into the community in a different light," he said.

"We're out there on a joyous occasion. Instead of seeing people at their worst and having to deal with them when they're in crisis, it's nice to be out there and see people when they're happy to see us."

Volunteers and Battlefords RCMP members gather at the Battlefords District Food & Resource Centre after the Cram the Cruiser food drive in North Battleford on Dec. 6, 2025. (Kenneth Cheung/battlefordsNOW)

Residents brought food, but also warmth.

“It was pretty cold out there today. I don’t even know how many people drop by with coffees for us and hot chocolates to keep us warm. So it was really nice to see that.” The team soon realized they needed more than cruisers to hold everything. “We brought out our big command truck and thought we’d use that to kind of take some of the stuff out of the police cars and we actually ended up cramming that thing too,” he said. Bell estimated the equivalent of nine to 15 cruisers were filled throughout the day.

(Kenneth Cheung/battlefordsNOW)

Volunteers powering the day

Members of the Citizens on Patrol Program (COPP) were also out in force, helping staff donation points across the community. “They also do stuff like this and help us out with community events. So, they are instrumental today helping us out there too.” As the last donations were packed away, Bell offered a simple message to the community.

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The electrically powered wagon

The **oldest police car** was an **electrically powered wagon** operated by the **Akron Police Department** in **1899**. Designed by Frank Loomis and manufactured by the Collins Buggy Company, this vehicle cost **$2,400** at the time and was equipped with electric lights and gongs, reaching speeds of **16 mph** (26 km/h) and traveling **30 miles** (48 km) before needing a recharge. This innovation marked a significant step in the history of police vehicles, allowing for faster responses to emergencies.

Piikani Nation partner with Alberta RCMP to establish Citizen on Patrol chapter

Crime in Canada January 19, 2025

The Piikani Nation has made history by launching Alberta’s Citizens on Patrol (ACOPA) chapter on a First Nation in partnership with the Alberta RCMP. The Piikani ACOPA chapter officially began in October of 2024, with its first patrol taking place on Halloween night.

Citizens on Patrol is a volunteer-based initiative that mobilizes local residents to work in

cooperation with law enforcement, serving as the eyes and ears of their community to enhance safety and reduce crime.

The Alberta RCMP has long valued community partnerships like Citizens on Patrol, whose efforts bring community members together to support frontline officers by providing local knowledge and fostering a united approach to public safety.

“This is a big deal for us and a major step forward in crime prevention,” said S/Sgt. Vince Bacon of the Piikani RCMP Detachment. “Citizens on Patrol has been wonderful in making this happen, even allowing us to adjust the ACOPA logo to reflect First Nations representation. This milestone represents a step in the right direction for collaboration and communication between the Piikani Nation and our detachment.”

With seven members already trained and operational, the Piikani ACOPA chapter is looking to expand its roster and increase the frequency of patrols.

“We received a grant to cover brochures, jackets, and shirts, but funding is needed to sustain and grow the program,” said Kimberly Hurst, ACOPA President. “We’re hoping to secure support to cover fuel costs for patrols and a cell phone for the group to stay connected during operations. Data and fuel costs shouldn’t be barriers to keeping a community safe, especially when you have motivated people willing to step up.” Hurst and S/Sgt. Bacon believe that the Piikani ACOPA chapter stands as an inspiring example for other communities on the power of communication and community spirit in breaking down barriers and creating lasting change.

“If you care about your community, you can make a difference,” said Hurst. “ACOPA isn’t just about patrolling; it’s about empowering individuals to take their community back and create a safer future. I truly do believe one person can make a difference.”

Great Reasons to Volunteer

- Volunteering is a great way to bring new experiences into your life. It may help you discover new interests or start a new hobby.
- You can use volunteering to connect with others. Through volunteering, you can meet new people and expand your network.
- Doing volunteer work can help you gain professional experience. It can even be useful in” getting your foot in the door” and provide you with a great reference.
- Volunteering can improve your level of happiness. It can work as a psychological enhancer, alleviating boredom and possibly even depression.
- It is possible that volunteering can even boost your health. Some studies also show that people who volunteer may have a longer life expectancy than those who don’t.
- Volunteering remains popular with Canadians. In 2023, 63% of the population had taken part in at least one form of voluntary activity. While the volunteer rate for formal voluntary work was 32%, many more Canadians engaged in informal voluntary work such as helping neighbours, friends, or relatives.
- n 2023, the volunteer rate for formal volunteering in Canada was 32%, down from 41% in 2018. Data on the specific breakdown of formal volunteer activities for 2023 are not

yet published in the same detail as 2018, but overall participation in formal volunteering decreased significantly.

- In 2018, the most common types of formal volunteering were fundraising and organising events. In 2018, 18% of Canadians had helped to organise, coordinate, or supervise events or activities. In 2018, 16% of Canadians helped to raise funds for organisations, 13% sat on a board or committee, 12% volunteered as teachers or mentors, 11% collected, served, or delivered food, and 10% provided advice or counselling.

NSCOPA Volunteers gather for Annual Training Day at RCMP H Division Headquarters
Credit: Ken Casey

What is the Good Samaritan law in Canada?

A person who voluntarily provides emergency assistance to an individual injured in an accident or emergency is not liable in damages for injury to or the death of that individual caused by any act or omission in providing the emergency assistance, unless the person is grossly negligent.

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