

A reminder to slow down

■ SPEEDMINDER
CAN BE QUICKLY
SET UP IN ANY
NEIGHBOURHOOD

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Blow past at more than the legal limit and its angry red face will get back in yours.

Keep to the posted speeds and it seems to smile with bright green numbers.

It is a SpeedMinder, and it soon could be available to any resident who feels drivers are constantly tearing up and down their neighbourhood streets with no regard for pedestrians, cyclists or other vehicles.

Recently purchased by Welland Safe Communities and its city partner for \$3,500, the U.S.-manufactured device is a roadside radar unit on wheels. Its primary purpose is to remind motorists to slow it down.

The SpeedMinder records vehicle counts, speed violations, top speeds and average speeds wherever it may be set up to serve warning.

Drivers saw its flashing numbers on First Avenue Friday, where Ward 1 Coun. Pat Chiochio, chair off the safe communities committee, and city traffic and parking operations manager Dave Ferguson were stationed south of Quaker Road.

The two men were in the same 40 km/h zone two weeks earlier, when the top speed was clocked at 94 km/h and the average was 61 km/h.

Of the 122 vehicles that drove past its built-in radar gun that week, only six drivers stuck to the posted limit, Chiochio said.

Like King Street near the arena, the



STAFF PHOTO GREG FURMINGER

Dave Ferguson, Welland's traffic and parking operations manager, and Ward 1 Coun. Pat Chiochio monitor First Avenue speeders Friday with a new device that will be loaned out to residents concerned about neighbourhood safety.

First Avenue route near Niagara College regularly generates speeding complaints, he said.

All the information logged by the SpeedMinder can be downloaded for city and police uses.

"All the speed studies we do, I forward to the police department for their information," Ferguson said.

Where problems persist, police are asked to step in and enforce limits, he said.

"A lot of the time people just drive at speeds they feel is comfortable."

Chiochio said there are plans to develop a "speed watch" program through which residents will be able to sign out the new radar device that can fit into the trunk of a car, be rolled to the side of the road and be activated in just minutes.

There are also plans to purchase another SpeedMinder this year, he said.