



The Safe Community Safe Neighbourhood sub-committee is focused on traffic safety for one of its goals. From left, Brigitte Chiki, chair of Safe Neighbourhoods and director of student services at Niagara College, Coun. Pat Chiochio, co-chair of the Safe Community steering committee, Insp. Rick Lundy, Niagara Regional Police Service Division 33 commander, John Sherwin, CAA Niagara director of public relations, Rick Demers, co-chair of the Safe Community steering committee, and Dave Ferguson, City of Welland traffic department.

'Driving after drinking? Think again!'

By **MAGGIE RIOPELLE**
Senior Staff Reporter

The Safe Community Safe Neighbourhoods sub-committee wants to send a sobering message to students and residents of Welland.

All this week there was a smashed up car sitting at the corner of Woodlawn

and First Avenue on the Niagara College campus. It reads: "Driving after drinking? THINK AGAIN!"

It serves as a reminder to students starting college and residents who use the busy intersection, that drinking and driving is not acceptable and police have zero tolerance for such behaviour.

"One of the initiatives of the Safe Neighbourhoods sub-committee is traffic safety," explained Coun. Pat Chiochio, co-chair of the Safe Community steering committee.

"They have set their goals and objectives, which will help us with our business plan."

The Safe Community

steering committee will develop a business plan, which will then be submitted to the initiative's foundation.

If approved, the City of Welland will be designated as a safe community.

Such designation, would not only serve to enhance the community's reputation, but also be a great selling point when attracting new professionals or businesses to the community.

There are a number of Safe Community sub-committees, Safe Neighbourhoods being one of them.

"The Safe Neighbourhoods sub-committee has compiled safety information and reviewed (traffic) data from Niagara Regional Police Service (Division 33 Welland) Inspector Rick Lundy," added Coun. Chiochio.

The wrecked car is not just for college students, urged Coun. Chiochio, but instead serves as a reminder to everyone to drive safe and sober.

"This is a high traffic area and we felt this was a good

place to park it," he said.

"This initiative is really thanks to a partnership between the City, Niagara College, and Niagara Regional Police Service. That is how we get the messages out - it's by working together on initiatives like this."

Insp. Lundy said it is a good time of year to remind motorists about traffic safety and the car is a very visual message that will hopefully garner the attention it deserves.

"It is a very visual message and shows what some of the consequences can be," he said.

"We want to promote safety and it is timely in that it is the start of a new school year. This is the first traffic safety initiative of Safe Neighbourhoods."

"I can only commend the partners with Safe Community and praise them for their efforts in ensuring Welland is a safer community."

Two of the common factors in any accident, are speed and alcohol, he added.

"This initiative really ties in with our off-campus housing initiative," added Brigitte Chiki, chair of the Safe Neighbourhoods sub-committee and director of student services at Niagara College.

"We want to make everyone aware that we want them to drive safe. We want the students to learn lessons inside in the classroom and learn an impor-

tant out of class lesson outside.

"We decided traffic safety would be one of our focuses because it is an issue for the Niagara Region and obviously we based our decision on statistical data from the NRPS."

"We also had the feeling that in order for people to feel safe in their neighbourhoods, traffic safety is an important issue. We want everyone to have a safe experience in Welland."

"We get requests from schools and other organizations to have the wrecked car for display," explained John Sherwin, director public relations CAA Niagara, the organization that provides the vehicle with the important message. "It offers a sober reminder."

The vehicle on display has not been part of an actual drinking and driving incident. In fact, the vehicle is a car that no longer runs, which the CAA smashes up to be used as an educational tool.

"We are sensitive to the fact that using a car from an accident, we would hate to have a family drive by and recognize it, which could bring back had memories."

"So we get a vehicle from the wreckers and we bang it up so it looks like it has been in a collision. The Niagara Region has the dubious distinction of having the most accidents resulting in injury or death. This vehicle is a sober reminder."

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