

Introducing Road Watch

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Curbing dangerous driving is what the Road Watch program is all about.

The idea was pitched Thursday to the Welland Safe Community Partnership by Dave Ferguson, manager of traffic and parking operations for the city.

Ferguson said the program was originally started in Caledon and has since become a nationwide initiative modelled after the Neighbourhood Watch program.

He plans to prepare a report for Welland city council in an effort to undertake a pilot project in areas of the city where there have been ongoing traffic complaints.

The goals of the program are education, awareness and enforcement, but Ferguson admitted there are still some details to work out in order to adapt Road Watch to this municipality.

He said endorsement by the Welland Safe Community Committee and Niagara Regional Police Service are the first steps in bringing the program to Welland.

Ferguson has also had some prelim-

inary discussions with CAA Niagara with respect to producing pamphlets that can be distributed door-to-door in the pilot areas.

He said other cost considerations would be with respect to signs – both at the gateway to the city and in the neighbourhoods where the program would be in force.

The program relies on residents who witness aggressive and dangerous driving behaviour to report it to the city.

Once a report has been filed, an incident number is assigned and the city follows up the complaint with a letter to the vehicle owner.

Questions were raised at the meeting as to what role the police would play in the program.

Ferguson said the Road Watch program has been successful in other jurisdictions and instituting the program in Welland on a pilot basis would help determine whether a city-wide program would be beneficial.

"We may get four months down the road and decide it isn't working," he said.

Pat Chiochio, chair of the committee, said he would like to see more information about the program before moving ahead.

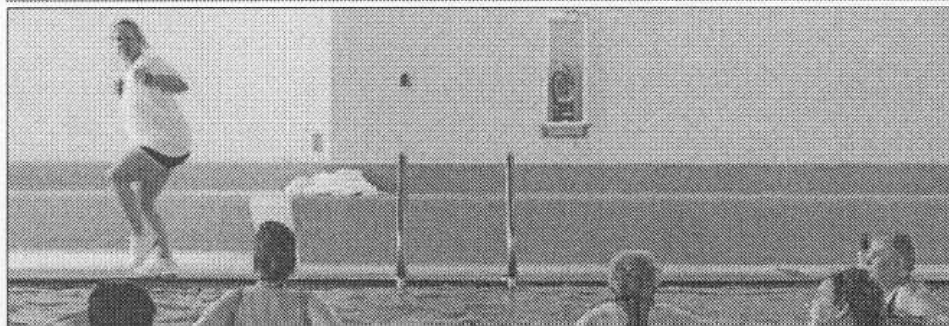
"I'd like to see a report from the

other communities," Chiochio said. "I want to know if there is going to be extra expenditures for the police service."

NRP Sgt. Bob Hanson said creating awareness with respect to aggressive driving is a good thing.

The police service does take aggressive driving very seriously and will respond to complaints in areas of concern, he added.

Hanson said the public does have a role to play in reporting traffic violations, but Road Watch programs have worked best in rural areas, especially in instances where motorists have called in complaints by cellphone.



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