

Making Welland a safer place

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WELLAND

When cities become safe communities, their citizens are healthier and everyone saves money.

The Welland Safe Communities steering committee held its inaugural meeting Tuesday and the 14 members are looking for ways to make Welland a safer place to live and work.

The program started in 1996 and since then it has expanded to 35 Canadian cities from Halifax to Calgary. Some of the goals include reducing workplace injuries and improving traffic safety.

Laura Ip says there has been overwhelming interest in setting up the initiative in Welland.

The executive assistant to the mayor and the city manager says many companies have health and safety procedures.

However, there is no connection between the different organizations.

In Welland, the steering committee consists of representatives from four school boards, the Welland-Pelham chamber of commerce, the Niagara Regional Police, the Welland Fire Department and the city.

"It involves the entire community," Ip says.



City councillor Mary Ann Grimaldi, front, École Champlain principal Rheal Seguin and Niagara Regional Police inspector Rick Lundy listen during the inaugural meeting of the Welland Safe Communities meeting Tuesday morning. STAFF PHOTO DEREK SWARTZ

Accidents have a cost in addition to pain and suffering — there is the cost of emergency police, ambulance and fire services, as well as the cost of hospitalization and counselling for the victims and their families.

That doesn't even count the lost productivity to the employer and higher workplace insurance rates.

According to the World Health

Organization, for every \$1 spent on Safe Communities society saves \$40.

Welland's steering committee meets again March 31 to choose its chair and to form its subcommittees.

After that meeting the board members will start looking for interested citizens to sit on the subcommittees.

Information is available at www.safecomunities.ca.