

# Welland Tribune (On)

## Speed Watch at work

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You can do something to slow down speeders on Welland streets.

Welland city council this week revved up its Speed Watch program.

Individuals and groups can sign out the city's SpeedMinder - a roadside radar unit - that the city and the Welland Safe Communities committee bought earlier this year.

You can set the unit up on the side of your street to remind drivers to stay within the speed limit. It's easy for any driver to forget and slip 10 or 20 kilometres per hour over the speed limit.

For most drivers, seeing their speed flash in front of them will slow them down. They will remember they did it, the next time they are on the street.

The SpeedMinder displays excessive speeds in red numbers and safe speeds in green. It will record vehicle counts, speed violations, top speeds and average speeds wherever.

The information not only provides a warning, but we suspect will alert city traffic officials to local conditions. It could lead to either an adjustment of speeds limits or increased police enforcement depending on the circumstances.

In March, for example, from a setup on First Avenue north of Niagara College, the SpeedMinder recorded a top 94 km/h speed in a 40 km/h zone. That was outrageous.

But on that same day it found the average speed through the zone was 61 km/h. That makes you wonder how aware drivers are of the local speed limit.

There are rules for using the \$3,500 radar unit. You are responsible for loss or damage and must sign a liability waiver. And of course, you must have time to mind the minder.

The Speed Watch program does give residents something positive to do about speeding on their roads. It will provide them with recorded information to back up complaints. Or they may discover after a few hours beside the SpeedMinder, speeders are actually the exception rather than the rule on their street.

Either way, it beats making after-the-fact phone calls to city councillors or police about speeders who are long gone.

In general, the SpeedMinder exercise will work on

most drivers. They will reduce their speeds once shown what they are doing. They may well feel sheepish about it.

Ward 1 Coun. Pat Chiochio, chair of Welland Safe Communities, said the Speed Watch program will help in areas where police resources can't be deployed.

To some extent, he's right.

But as Ward 5 Coun. Mark Dzugan pointed out this is not a substitute for policing. We can see how it can guide them to trouble spots.

"Does it bring awareness? Yes. But it doesn't bring as much awareness as a \$100 ticket brings awareness," Dzugan said in a Tribune story by Greg Furfinger.

For some drivers, you need a heavy hand for a heavy foot.

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