

Welland is region's first official Safe Community

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The Rose City is now one of 47 communities in Canada designated as a Safe Community.

The Welland Safe Community Partnership received word of the designation from the Safe Communities Foundation Friday.

"It's official," Coun. Pat Chiochio said in reference to a community initiative that has been more than a year in the making. "We are proud and we are dedicated to continuing our work to make Welland the safest place to live, work and play."

The Welland Safe Community Partnership is made up of businesses, agencies, institutions and concerned citizens all coming together to make the city safer. The subcommittees are addressing everything from traffic safety issues to protecting seniors from telephone scams.

"This is a community initiative that has the support of the mayor and council," Chiochio, who serves as chair of the WSCP, said.

Now that the group has received its official designation, it is eligible for a \$6,000 grant from the Safe Communities Foundation. Chiochio said the money can be applied to project or administration costs.

The group is also looking to the community to raise funds and help with the legwork in accomplishing a number of goals.

One subcommittee project current-

ly under way is a health and wellness survey of small businesses in Welland. Once the results are compiled, work will begin to develop health and wellness programs for small businesses.

As the WSCP subcommittees work on implementing their goals and objectives, the steering committee will work toward a community-wide launch of the Safe Community Initiative during Safe Kids Week, May 30 to June 5.

"The Welland Safe Community Partnership is intended to be a community-wide initiative," Rick Demers, vice-chair of the steering committee, said.

"It's our goal to make Welland a safer community; and to do that, we need the support and co-operation of all our residents and businesses."

The Safe Communities Foundation was founded in 1996 by Paul Kells. It was in response to an industrial accident that killed his son, Sean, in 1994.

The mission of the Safe Communities Foundation is to help people come together in the community to create a sense of awareness, understanding, support and leadership to implement effective, local programs to eliminate injuries and suffering.

Welland is the first municipality in Niagara to receive the Safe Community designation.

If you would like to get involved with the Welland Safe Community Partnership, please contact Laura Ip at 905-735-1700, ext. 239 or by e-mail at lauraip@welland.ca.