

Springfield Adopts “Operation PAL”

Springfield residents will soon be seeing a new logo on all of the municipal vehicles and may wonder what it symbolizes. “Operation PAL”. PAL stands for **P**ublic **A**Lert. It’s a partnership between local law enforcement and Public Works, Fire/Rescue and the Building Inspections Department field staff where communications and advisories are enhanced relating to suspicious vehicles, and activity, break and enters, Amber Alerts, criminal activity and general public safety. Springfield is the first Capital Region municipality to fully adopt the program.

Springfield Police Constable Warren Morfoot said that “It’s simply an excellent tool in helping police keep the 427 square miles of the municipality safe. Broadcasted advisories to municipal field staff give law enforcement rapid response to effective and efficient eyes and ears for our limited resources.” Although there was an existing partnership already in-place for a couple of years now between police and municipal field staff in an informal way, communicating priorities will now be enhanced and recognized. Municipal police already have radio communications with other municipal vehicles and there are capabilities in place to utilize the Fire/Rescue pagers, but there was no formal plan, format or recognition. Council Member Ken Lucko suggested, at a Protective Services meeting, that contributors take the extra step and do just that. Council agreed, and Morfoot was asked to move forward on the matter. Knowing that Manitoba Hydro had retained Operation PAL when it took over Centra Gas he contacted Gary Singleton of Manitoba Hydro’s Customer Service & Marketing Department.

Singleton recently re-contacted Morfoot advising that Manitoba Hydro would be more than happy to support Springfield’s initiative in adoption of the program. Morfoot himself was a Hydro employee many years ago and believed the response from Hydro would be no less than positive because he’s had personal experience in Manitoba Hydro and its employees’ community-minded spirit. Police will now be formally instructing contributors on the “Do’s & Don’ts” and filling in Incident Reports similar to what is known as the Citizens On Patrol Program (COPP) where private citizens volunteer their time to patrol the municipality after-hours. “This is a good thing. These types of efforts should pay some pretty good dividends. There’s as much criminal activity during daylight hours as there is thought the night. We (police) really appreciate the value of this partnership. Thank You all.” said Morfoot.