Server Olympics

Ameerah Morad of the team from Red Robin tackles on of the many obstacles in the Server Olympics. Her team placed first in the annual Vernon Winter Carnival event. She also won the prize for best costume in the event.

WAYNE EMDE Special to the Daily Courier

Man facing charges after overnight police standoff

By DAILY COURIER STAFF

A man is facing numerous charges following a 15-hour standoff with police in the North Okanagan.

Late Sunday night, police were called to a residence in the 11600 block of Torrent Drive in Coldstream for reports of a distraught male, believed to be armed and alone inside his home.

The man barricaded himself inside the home and refused to come out for police.

Mounties learned the 20-year-old male allegedly assaulted and uttered threats to a female resident of the home, who was able to escape the premises to safety prior to police arrival.

Nearby neighbours were evacuated, while others in the area were told to stay inside their homes.

After a 15-hour standoff with police, the man was arrested and taken into custody.

The female victim was treated for minor injuries at a local medical facility.

"The North Okanagan RCMP would like to thank the public and residents that were affected by the incident for their patience and support as we worked to resolve the situation with the desired peaceful outcome it had," said Const. Kelly Brett.

A search warrant was executed at the home and a firearm was seized, she said.

The man is facing possible charges relating to firearm offences and assault.

The investigation is ongoing.

Downtown Penticton plagued by drug use, public drinking: DPA

Businesses 'under siege,' Ryan Graham tells council

Downtown businesses are calling on the RCMP to "take back our downtown." Downtown Penticton Association president Ryan Graham, manager of Cleary's Liquor Store, presented the concerns of downtown business owners at Tuesday's city council committee of the whole meeting, saying businesses downtown are "all under siege."

"We have daily drug users coming in and using the washrooms as injection sites. This is a battle that we are all losing," Graham said. "The RCMP is always quoted as 'call us, report it.'

"The problem with that is the current, extended-period wait times or, in all honesty, the no-shows when these calls are made."

Graham also pointed to open-alcohol problems downtown, with drinking from 9 a.m. to sundown now the norm, he said, along with intoxicated individuals and bootlegging for youth.

"We're asking today to hit the refresh. Our local RCMP, our bylaw, city council and staff — this needs to be a joint effort," Graham said. He said the amount of used needles found in parking lots, near schools and in back alleys downtown is "absolutely out of control."

"I noticed a group of four young ladies, aged 14 to 16, and what caught my attention was something they had in their hands. These young ladies were spinning a dirty needle that was connected to a two-and-a-half-foot-long tape. The needle had just been used," Graham said.

He also told of issues experienced by his own staff members, including a tire being slashed and spit being plastered across the employee's car.

"The faith is not there right now," Graham said of the RCMP.

Graham's submissions to city council

Graham

came pointedly prior to Insp. Ted De Jager, officer in charge of the Penticton RCMP, giving his quarterly crime report.

De Jager noted the RCMP's new community support and enforcement team, headed up by Cpl. Laurie Rock, is for the entire community.

"Not just the downtown. If there's a determination it should be focused on that, then we have to decide what areas we will not be focusing on," De Jager said. "It's not a question of whether we have enough resources — we do for a town of this size.

"It's a matter of deploying those resources appropriately, and we can certainly look at doing that balanced against our other priorities."

De Jager said every call for service comes with a file number given to the complainant, in response to Graham's claim of no-show calls to police.

In one instance, Graham said, a man was witnessed drinking an entire 15-pack of beer throughout the day with no attention paid by authorities.

"If there are cases where complainants were advised, the police were attending and the police did not attend, then I need those file numbers and then I can look at that in greater detail," De Jager said.

De Jager said looking ahead to the spring, overtime hours are going to be put in place allowing for two members active during peak hours for the busy tourist season.

Rock was on hand during the presentation and said she understands the frustrations, and touted the "see something, say something" approach.

"If we don't know about it, we can't deal with it," Rock said.

"If we don't get called about drug deals . . . those are the people our team is super anxious to catch. If we don't know about it, I can't do anything about it."

— Penticton Herald

Water board pushes feds for action on mussels

By DAILY COURIER STAFF

After hearing no response from the federal government about invasive mussel prevention since a meeting last spring, the Okanagan Basin Water Board has sent a follow-up letter asking for action.

"We are disheartened that the federal government hasn't made this a priority in our area," said OBWB chair Tracy Gray.

In June, members of the OBWB met with the federal government, and it was noted that $43.8 million was allocated to address aquatic invasive species in Canada over five years, until 2022.

The OBWB wants some of that money to go to protecting the region from invasive mussels.

"We remain concerned that another boating season has gone by, and there have been no new steps federally, or by way of assistance to the provinces, to contain invasive mussels or to prevent the further spread of invasive mussels in Canada, specifically to Western Canada and our region in British Columbia," the letter reads.

The OBWB requested an update on recommendations from the June 2017 meeting, including allocating funding to match provincial spending to improve invasive mussel education, to enhance the protection of federally controlled lands, waterways and border crossings, and to confirm participation in the Pacific Northwest economic region invasive species working group to coordinate efforts to stop the spread of invasive mussels.