

Criminal Intelligence Service Alberta

Semi Annual Report

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INTRODUCTION

This is the last semi-annual report associated with our current three-year business plan. While it is still too soon to report on the final outcome of the entire business plan, there are certainly many aspects of the criminal intelligence/organized crime scene that have evolved during the past three years. There have been many successes but many challenges remain and new challenges are emerging. A new business plan has been approved by the Executive of CISA and is now in the hands of the Solicitor General. While the sustained funding of the Bureau is not in question at this time, we have requested funding that will enhance our program and cover the increased operating expenses that have been incurred. We look forward to the opportunity of working with the Alberta Solicitor General during the business plan review process.

Many observers and commentators across the country have weighed in on the issue of marihuana grow operations. A recent description that is appropriate from our perspective is that, "this single enterprise is the third leg in the stool of organized crime." As you read this report, it will become clearer that the police are expending a considerable amount of resources in combating all aspects of marihuana production. Since the beginning of this year, seizures made have exceeded 100 million dollars in product, property and money in Alberta. With the current legislation review and lack of significant judicial deterrents, this is seen as a low-risk/high return activity for organized crime groups, not only in Alberta but also across Canada. Coupled with the expanding methamphetamine production and market, both activities are providing organized crime with huge profits that are being driven into the economy in ever increasing complex schemes to avoid detection. The recent public opinion survey that CISA commissioned reveals 70 percent of the respondents believe that while organized crime actively launders money, only 46 percent feel that these groups participate in grow operations. It is clear that we must better inform and educate the public, as well as the courts, on the actual activities of organized crime and the linkages of their actions.

The CISA and Integrated Response to Organized Crime (IROC) partnership is beginning to blossom. IROC will soon be in a position to inform the public about some of their investigational efforts, which in turn continues to feed crucial intelligence into CISA. The sustained presence of both the intelligence and enforcement capacities will have the desired impact on organized crime groups in Alberta. This does not mean that we will be able to eradicate organized crime entirely but we will be positioned to stay abreast of, and ahead of in some instances, the ever-changing face of organized crime and the threat it poses to all communities in Alberta.

Inspector Ian Cameron
Director, CISA



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an effort to provide effective collection, analysis and dissemination of criminal intelligence, a number of initiatives have been completed or are in progress. All Alberta police services are now making use of Project Lion, a database system that manages and shares confidential source information between the Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat police services.

CISA agencies continue to receive training and support on the latest version of ACIIS (ACIIS-3). ACIIS growth has expanded to include three additional new agencies over the past year.

The Alberta Public Safety Network (APSNET) initiative continues to move forward with the development of the necessary software. It is expected that the roll out of this system will begin towards year-end and will continue into the spring of 2005.

The CISA JFO Threat Assessment Team now meets once a year to complete the classified threat assessment. An environmental scan was added to the Provincial Threat Assessment. A strategic assessment of organized crime in Alberta, devoid of sensitive information, was prepared and distributed to all CISA members and the other intelligence Bureaux in Canada.

CISA wrote, "The Scope and Socio-Economic Impact of Indoor Marihuana Growing Operation in Alberta" in an effort to summarize the findings of the Konifer project, which gathered marihuana grow operation data from 2002/2003.

CISA continues to be involved in supporting Joint Forces Operations targeting serious and organized crime in Alberta. Project Kare is actively investigating the disappearance and homicides of several sex trade workers in the Edmonton area. Project Keystone targets the trafficking of controlled substances in northern Alberta. The Green Team investigates indoor marihuana grow operations found in the northern part of Alberta while Project SAMIT investigates indoor marihuana grow operations in the southern part of the province. Project Iliad dismantled an alleged drug trafficking and money laundering ring with connections to Barbados.

CISA offered a number of training opportunities to law enforcement personnel including: Human Source Management, a Drug Expert Workshop, Informant Workshops, a Surveillance Workshop and co-partnered the Asia Conference in Calgary.

The CISA website consists of two domains, the public site and the private site, both of which are now operational. The public side provides information concerning the impact of organized crime, ideas for crime prevention and information on CISA itself. The private side includes articles regarding intelligence, officer safety, training opportunities, ACIIS and analytical reports.



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The Alberta Counter Terrorism Crisis Management Plan is now in place. CISA has been given the responsibility for being the conduit for the sharing of intelligence between the RCMP National Security Intelligence Sections (NSIS) in Alberta and other members of CISA, including the Security Information Management Unit of the Alberta Solicitor General.

The Proceeds of Crime Law Enforcement Grant Program continues to be an excellent source of investigational funding for the nine Alberta police services. Six applications were received this year, however only five of these could be accommodated. Applications for assistance from this program consistently exceed the available funds.



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GOAL 1: To Provide Effective Collection, Analysis and Dissemination of Criminal Intelligence

The implementation of Project LION, a database system that manages and shares confidential source information between the Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat police services continues to be monitored by a working committee. The hardware/software for this program has been in place for one year and all the services are now using this tool. Future meetings of the committee will focus on promoting the loading of information onto the system and the continued standardization of the reporting documents.

CISA agencies continue to receive training and support on the latest version of ACIIS (ACIIS-3). Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, the Policy centre for ACIIS-3, has continued to support the software through continual upgrades, the latest upgrade occurring on April 18, 2004. With quality entry being the goal, some CISA ACIIS locations received a formal audit from the Policy Centre in the later part of last year.

ACIIS growth in CISA has been expanded to include three additional new agencies over the past year; RCMP Grande Prairie GIS/Drugs, Integrated Response to Organized Crime (IROC) North and IROC South. These additions as well as the three new agencies coming online over the last year have been provided with the ACIIS hardware and are receiving ACIIS training and support.

The Alberta Public Safety Network (APSNET) initiative continues to move forward with the development of the necessary software. APSNET will provide Alberta police services with seamless access to disparate and separate police management systems and databases across the province. This means that a police officer will be able to search the records management system of all Alberta police services with a single query. It is expected that the roll out of this system will begin towards year-end and will continue into the spring of 2005. Completion of this initiative will be, in part, dependant on the RCMP who are in the process of implementing a new records management system.

CISA has led an initiative to develop a standardized threat assessment process in cases where organized crime threatens or intimidates a component of the justice system. This process involved all major police services in Alberta, the Security Information Management Unit of the Alberta Solicitor General and included input from both the Federal and Provincial Crown. In support of this initiative, a two-week training program was organized and delivered to coordinators in Calgary this past spring. Working protocols have been implemented and agencies have developed internal policies, which are in the approval process. Upon completion, a program information bulletin will be distributed to all stakeholders for their reference.



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GOAL 2: To Develop Intelligence-Based Analytical Products and Participate in the Preparation of Provincial Threat Assessments on Organized Crime for the Benefit of Senior Police Managers and Various Levels of Government

CISA completed the report, “The Scope and Socio-Economic Impact of Indoor Marihuana Growing Operations in Alberta” at the beginning of this year. This report was written in an effort to summarize the findings of the Konifer project, which gathered marihuana grow operation data from 2002/2003. Konifer was a project proposed to determine the amount of organized crime involvement in indoor and outdoor marihuana grows throughout the province of Alberta. The report provides a general understanding of the marihuana growing process from the equipment required to the multiple hazards that emanate from this criminal activity. From small ‘Mom & Pop’ grows to highly sophisticated operations, the majority of marihuana grows have an organized crime element.

In April 2004, the CISA Joint Forces Organized Crime Threat Assessment Team convened at the Bureau and prepared a classified threat assessment for dissemination to the senior managers of the CISA Level One services. An environmental scan was added to the Provincial Threat Assessment this year. This portion of the report was intended to highlight salient social or economic changes and the expected impact, either direct or indirect, on organized crime and policing rather than providing a complete picture of the social, economic and political situation in the Alberta.

Following the distribution of the classified threat assessment, a strategic assessment of organized crime in Alberta, devoid of sensitive information, was prepared and distributed to all CISA members and the other intelligence Bureaux in Canada. In this manner, CISA is confident that these changes will ensure that senior police managers have the most current intelligence information as well as providing more feedback to the frontline personnel as to what organized crime groups are active in Alberta.

Following are summaries of the current situation in Alberta for each of the national and provincial organized crime priorities:

Asian Organized Crime

Asian-based criminal groups continue to be one of the most significant threats of all organized crime groups in Alberta. Asian organized crime is still identified as the most violent, that reputation made manifest by several related murders in Calgary and Edmonton over the past year. It dominates the majority of street level cocaine trafficking in Alberta’s major urban centres as well as hydroponic marihuana cultivation and distribution. Ten groups are considered to be significant, with an additional seven being of potential law enforcement interest.



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Eastern European Organized Crime

There are four Eastern European criminal groups that are active in Alberta. The groups are profit-motivated; adept at identifying and exploiting vulnerabilities of individuals, institutions, or regulations; established in the legitimate business community; and well connected to other EEOC criminals.

Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs

Three chapters of the Hells Angels continue to operate in Alberta. The Alberta Hells Angels chapters have faced growing pressure from other outlaw motorcycle gangs over the past year. The emergence of Deaths Hand and formation of a Bandidos chapter in Alberta may be seen as threats to the local Hells Angels.

Deaths Hand drew attention in the spring of 2003 when they appeared to be a prospect club of the Calgary Hells Angels chapter. It became apparent that both sides were at odds culminating in the disappearance of the president of Deaths Hand.

In January 2004, two men (one from Edmonton and one from British Columbia) were shot and killed outside a strip club in Edmonton. The funeral was the first opportunity for investigators to observe local Alberta members wearing Bandidos colours. Two probationary and two prospect members were also observed at that time. It is unknown what the intentions of the Bandidos in Alberta or their response to these murders will be. Bandidos members identified so far include some people who were not accepted into the Hells Angels ranks, disgruntled former members and associates of the Hells Angels, and drug dealers. More recently, police have recently identified six former Deaths Hand members who have joined the Alberta Bandidos.

Police in Calgary have observed colours of another motorcycle club, Iron Steed. Little is presently known about it and efforts to identify members and associates are underway.

Traditional Organized Crime

Three Criminal groups have been identified so far. Their typical criminal activities include drug trafficking, illegal gaming, fraud, theft, prostitution and money laundering.

Air, Land and Marine Ports

The greatest threat for involvement by organized crime is in Canada's massive commercial freight system. Containers arriving at sea ports are moved inland via rail or truck to sufferance warehouses, which are privately owned and operated facilities licensed by Canada Customs for the control, short-term storage and examination of in-bound goods. Container yards in cities are, in effect, extensions of seaports. It is conceivable that organized crime may be exploiting the warehouse system in inland provinces such as Alberta. As a new national



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organized crime priority, information concerning illegal activities within Alberta's port system will be sought after for analysis.

Jamaican Organized Crime

Criminals of Jamaican descent in Edmonton and Calgary are known to traffic in cocaine and there has been reporting from Lethbridge and Vegreville of this type of activity.

Middle Eastern Organized Crime

Three criminal groups have been identified, all of which are described as being violent; they are active in the drug trade. In today's global climate, law enforcement remains mindful of the possibility that criminal groups could have links to criminal extremists.

South Asian Organized Crime

Despite the highly publicized violence in Edmonton between two factions of the South Asian community a few years ago (Sikh and Muslim), the scene now appears to be relatively quiet. It is believed that their criminal activities continue, but without the level of violent confrontation of past years. Again, law enforcement is mindful of the potential that local criminal activities could support extremism.

A joint forces investigation of an Edmonton criminal group resulted in the arrests of key individuals last summer and dozens of criminal charges for credit and debit card-skimming and counterfeiting, credit card fraud, auto theft and weapons offences.

Terrorism

CISA continues to be involved with Alberta police services and the Security Information Management Unit of the Alberta Solicitor General toward the finalization and implementation of the Alberta Counter Terrorism Crisis Management Process.

Drugs

Detection of marihuana growing operations in Alberta is on the rise and there is evidence that Asian organized crime groups control the majority of these operations. Organized crime is involved in various aspects of production, from securing the grow houses, tending the crops, providing security and protection, acting as agents and trafficking the final product. Proceeds from marihuana operations are frequently funneled into other criminal activities including the importation and trafficking of cocaine, ecstasy and heroin, or laundered by reinvesting in legitimate businesses.

While operating at a lower level of organization or sophistication, street-level "speeder" groups are a key component of the methamphetamine market. These



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groups are made up of users who deal methamphetamine to other users, trade stolen property for methamphetamine and commit crimes to support their dependency. These groups are extremely fluid with no established membership, but are highly inter-connected. “Speeders” operate across jurisdictions, stealing property in outlying communities and disposing of it in Edmonton (and vice versa). Many communities in Alberta are beginning to report a rise in property theft as well as identity theft and fraud that coincides with an increasing availability of methamphetamine and its user population.

Identity Theft/Document Fraud

Identity theft and document fraud have been described in the media as the fastest growing crime in Canada. Counterfeit documents are being created and distributed by organized crime groups throughout Alberta. Personal information acquired by various means (such as “dumpster diving,” credit card skimming and theft of mail) is used to obtain false identifications or produce counterfeit documents. Police in Edmonton have checked methamphetamine users with collections of false documents and lists of credit card numbers, which are used to obtain goods and services. “Speeders” have gravitated to identity fraud, which can be accomplished with standard computer equipment.

Diamond Industry

Although northern Alberta has experienced significant exploration since 1997 when the first Buffalo Head Hills kimberlite was discovered, the Alberta rough diamond industry is in its infancy.

Alberta’s proximity to Yellowknife and the diamond mines in the Northwest Territories has led to some spin-off effects in this province. For example, DeBeers established a processing facility in Grande Prairie and a Yellowknife-based company (Braden-Burry Expediting) bought an Edmonton warehouse and hangar in 2001. Although there are no diamond cutting and polishing facilities currently operating at a commercial level in Alberta, facilities and equipment are available and could be brought into production.

Transport of rough and finished diamonds through Alberta may increase as northern production continues to grow, increasing the associated risks.



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GOAL 3: Participate in Multi-Agency and Multi-Disciplinary Joint Forces Operational Enforcement Strategies for Targeting Organized and Serious Crime in Alberta Through the Prudent Allocation of Resources

CISA continues to be involved in supporting Joint Forces Operations targeting serious and organized crime in Alberta. Presently, funding support is being provided to nine ongoing projects all of which are under active investigation.

Four of these projects are target-specific and ongoing therefore details cannot be reported on at this time. These cases are directed towards organized crime and have met the qualification criteria of our Joint Forces Funding Program for which CISA is involved. It can be stated that each of the projects are progressing favorably towards their objectives and it is anticipated that many of them will be reported in the 2005 annual report. However, the following is a brief summary of the five projects that are currently under investigation but are not target-specific:

Project KARE:

This project is actively investigating the disappearance and homicides of several sex trade workers in the Edmonton area. CISA continues to monitor this investigation and expenditures through participation in the Joint Management Team.

Project KEYSTONE:

This is a joint forces undercover team comprised of Edmonton Police Service and RCMP members who target the trafficking of controlled substances in northern Alberta. In addition to the City of Edmonton, this team has provided enforcement assistance to St. Albert, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Camrose, Peace River, McLennan, Fairview, High Prairie, High Level, Assumption, Rainbow Lake and Manning. The efforts of this project team have resulted in hundreds of trafficking related charges being laid.

Project GREEN TEAM:

The RCMP and Edmonton Police Service's joint forces marihuana team continues to be overwhelmed with investigations regarding the indoor cultivation of marihuana. From April to August 2004, the Green Team reports that 51 search warrants have been executed resulting in the seizure of \$16,427,058 of marihuana and 188 charges against 71 people.



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Project SAMIT:

The RCMP and Calgary Police Services joint forces marihuana team, Southern Alberta Marijuana Investigation Team (SAMIT), is also overwhelmed with investigations into indoor marihuana cultivation. They report in excess of 100 investigations awaiting action. From April to August of this year, the team had executed 55 search warrants seizing 20,266 marihuana plants worth \$22,965,900 resulting in 77 charges against 35 subjects.

Project ILIAD:

A partnership between Calgary and Edmonton Police, the Alberta Solicitor General and the RCMP - dismantled an alleged drug trafficking and money-laundering ring with connections to Barbados. Six Calgaryians were arrested on July 18th for trafficking in cocaine, ecstasy and methamphetamine following a six-month investigation. Two of the six were also charged with possession of property obtained by crime. Working with Barbadian authorities, investigators seized 1.5 kg, or \$60,000 of cocaine; 2 ounces of methamphetamine, valued at \$4,480; and 800 tabs of ecstasy worth \$8,000. They also confiscated \$125,000 in cash and two residences. Other non-drug proceeds of crime were seized in Barbados. Police say more arrests and charges are expected.



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GOAL 4: To Provide Professional Development for Alberta Law Enforcement Personnel in Order to Comprehend and Respond to the Criminal Activities of Organized Crime Groups and Serious Criminal Predators

CISA has continued to provide its membership with intelligence and enforcement-specific training in diverse subject areas. The courses delivered so far this year have dealt with establishing standards across the province in training organized crime investigators and other law enforcement members.

CISA offered the *Human Source Management* seven-day course this past April at the RCMP K Division, which replaced the two-week Source Agent course in an effort to condense and standardize our training with that of the RCMP. A total of 30 candidates attended this course, which focused on investigators improving their work with human sources to enhance their investigations. The *Human Source Management* course continues to be a challenge due to the requirement of instructors, syndicate leaders, quarries, and facilitators. This year CISA was fortunate to have the Calgary and Edmonton Police Services supply five syndicate leaders. The Edmonton Police Service also supplied nine volunteer quarries to portray informants in numerous scenarios and the RCMP supplied their many instructors and the facility to host the training.

Fifty-one candidates attended the *Drug Expert* workshop that CISA held at the RCMP K Division from April 13 to the 15th, 2004. Multiple agency drug investigators were able to network with other investigators within the province while learning new information and agency drug pricing. The three-day workshop included topics such as Methamphetamine Precursors and Cooking, Drugs in Institutions, Cocaine Cooking, and Marijuana Grows.

CISA's *Informant Workshops* have been well received in the past and as a result, three two-day workshops were held in Edmonton on May 6-7, in Lethbridge on May 10-11, and in Calgary on May 13-14. A total of two hundred and thirty-seven candidates from across the province attended the three consecutive training sessions.

In June, CISA offered a two-day *Surveillance Workshop* in Red Deer for those involved in surveillance within their agencies. The workshop covered regional updates and topics such as digital video photography, rural surveillance and cast-off DNA. Eighty-seven candidates participated in the workshop from all partner agencies.

CISA partnered with the RCMP, the Calgary Police Service, and the Asian Special Investigators Association to host the International *ASIA Conference* in Calgary from September 8-10, 2004. Two hundred and seven candidates from across the United States and Canada attended along with the organizing



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committee and instructors. Some of the topics included at the conference were Rising Trends in Methamphetamine Labs, Operation Synergy, Black Dragons, and Asian Culture.

GOAL 5: To Provide Enhanced Use of Technology to Combat the Evolution of Technologically Based Organized Crime

CISA continues to use technology to combat organized crime in a number of areas. The first phase of the CISA website is a public site that contains information about what CISA is, who the members are, what responsibilities the Bureau has, what impact organized crime has on Albertans, and also contains interest stories about organized crime. The second phase is the private domain site, which is now operational it is only accessible by law enforcement agencies who have been provided with a username and password from CISA.

CISA will be offering a two-day workshop, *First Responders to Cyber Crime*, this fall. This workshop educates investigators in the methods used to combat technologically-based organized crime and is designed for anyone who may encounter electronic evidence of any type at a crime scene, subsequent to an arrest or during a search. Senior police computer forensic experts will present a number of topics including; First Response to Crime Scenes/Arrest, Internet - The Dark Side, Identifying Targets (Open Source), Officer Safety at Electronic Crime Scenes, Computer Forensics, Internet Undercover Operations, Encryption and Steganography (the hiding of a secret message within an ordinary message), and Legal Aspects (Case Studies and Search Warrants).



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GOAL 6: To Establish and Enhance Partnerships with all Stakeholders to Reduce and Control Organized Crime and to be Accountable to all CISA Partners

Nine operational initiatives, including one initiative carried over from last year, have been approved for CISA funding support to date during 2004/05. One of the measurement criteria for this goal is to capture the total costs of these operation projects. The table below depicts the total investment of all partners for the current projects:

Projects	Funds Committed by CISA	Funds Committed by Police Services	Police Salaries, Fuel, Supplies, etc.	Total Cost
9 Initiatives	\$3,382,892.00	\$452,205.00	\$10,445,968.00	\$14,281,065.00

CISA conducted the fourth annual Public Opinion Survey on Organized Crime in July of this year and copies of the final report have been provided to the Department of the Solicitor General, the CISA community and the other Provincial Bureaux.

The Alberta Counter Terrorism Crisis Management Plan is now in place. CISA has been given the responsibility for being the conduit for the sharing of intelligence between the RCMP National Security Intelligence Sections (NSIS) in Alberta and other members of CISA, including the Security Information Management Unit of the Alberta Solicitor General. As CISA is equipped with the capability for the electronic distribution of information in either protected or encrypted format to our membership, this responsibility has fit nicely into our daily operations. The RCMP NSIS Sections have maintained the mandate to prepare Terrorism Threat Assessments and use the Bureau to distribute those as and when required.

GOAL 7: To Develop a Communications Strategy that Assists in Delivering an Accurate Message of the Scope and Impact of Organized Crime in Our Communities and to Assist in the Building of a Preventative Culture

The private side of the CISA website is operational and member agencies can obtain access through a username and password provided by CISA. The website includes numerous articles of interest regarding intelligence, officer safety, criminal and organized crime activity. Training opportunities are posted along with descriptions of course content and candidate selection criteria. The ACIIS program is outlined and services offered by CISA are listed. CISA analytical reports are included along with information on the Serious Habitual Offender Program and Proceeds of Crime Funding applications.



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Results from our most recent Public Opinion Survey suggest while Albertans differentiate certain organized crime activities from serious crime activities, people primarily associate importing and trafficking of drugs with organized crime. While organized crime is seen to have increased significantly over the years, both in terms of media coverage and political attention, the term is generally not well understood and its impact is not appreciated. This distortion could quite conceivably give organized crime groups an advantage. We need to better inform the public on the true impact, both socially and economically, that organized crime has on all communities in Alberta.

GOAL 8: To Facilitate and Manage the Proceeds of Crime Law Enforcement Grant Program on Behalf of the Ministry of the Solicitor General

In February 2005, five initiatives were approved for financial support through the Proceeds of Crime Law Enforcement Grant Program (POCLEG). The total assistance afforded to these initiatives was \$120,410, which included \$96,086 of new funding for this year as well as residual funds from 2003. Six POCLEG applications were received this year, however only five of these could be accommodated, as sufficient funds were not available.

One of the approved initiatives was a street-level enforcement project involving Camrose Police Service, Edmonton Police Service and the RCMP, which targeted methamphetamine traffickers. This project resulted in the arrest of 11 subjects and over 20 charges being laid.

Another joint forces investigation between the Lacombe municipal police service and the Red Deer RCMP will target street-level drug traffickers within their jurisdiction.

A Level II Fraud Investigators Course was organized and hosted by the Edmonton Police Service. Candidates from Alberta Government Services, Alberta Human Resources & Employment in addition to five Alberta Police Services participated in the course.

POCLEG funds enabled several pieces of high-tech surveillance equipment to be purchased to support operations in southern Alberta. Specialized equipment was also purchased to assist a methamphetamine investigative team in Edmonton.

Since the inception of this program in 1998, every police service in Alberta has benefited from the Proceeds of Crime Law Enforcement Grant. Applications for assistance from this program consistently exceed the available funds.



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CONCLUSION

CISA would not be as successful without our strong network of partnerships within the police community, government, and most importantly the public. Communication is the key to ensuring that all segments of society are in-tune with the efforts being made on their behalf, and the extent to which organized crime is operating in the province.

Numerous investigations have been successfully completed with charges being laid against members of organized crime. The Bureau, with the input of all the partner agencies, continues to amass intelligence on criminal activity and provide police executives and operational units with updated strategic and tactical-based information for use in their investigational and planning functions. Although we have experienced many successes with regards to the fight against organized crime, many challenges remain and new challenges are emerging.

Reporting best practices, expanding the training curriculum, participating in a multi-agency province wide threat assessment, and promoting the sharing of information amongst partner agencies are the pillars required to pursue innovative policing of organized crime. We must look for solutions that not only meet the needs of today; they must position us to respond to emerging trends and future challenges.