

LACOMBE POLICE SERVICE



2015

ANNUAL REPORT

"The police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence."

Sir Robert Peel 1829

**BUILDING A SAFE, VIBRANT
HEALTHY COMMUNITY
IS A SHARED VISION
AND A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY**



*Policing Excellence through
Leadership and Community
Partnership*

LACOMBE POLICE SERVICE



Message from the Chair of the Police Commission

On behalf of my colleagues on the Lacombe Police Commission, I am pleased to contribute to the Lacombe Police Service Annual Report to the Community.

The Lacombe Police Commission serves a vital role by providing civilian oversight to the Lacombe Police Service. The commission is the vital link between the community and the police with a mandate to balance requirements of public accountability with those of police independence. In accordance with the Alberta Police Act, the commission is responsible to:

- allocate the funds that are provided by the council;
- establish policies providing for efficient and effective policing;
- issue instructions, as necessary, to the chief of police in respect of those policies;
- ensure that sufficient persons are employed for the police service for the purposes of carrying out the functions of the police service.

This past year has seen the Commission continuing to be an effective governing body. Through the work of several sub-committees, we have streamlined our policy, clarified our selection and training procedures, confirmed through policy adjustment the role of the Public Complaints Director, and identified future staffing needs. The Commission also completed the objectives set out in our Strategic Plan, as well as the Oversight Standards Audit.

I would like to give a special thank you to my Commission colleagues: Tammy Gagnon, Bob Huff, John Walker, Judy Lucht and Luke Bannis who willingly give of their time to allow us to be an effective governance body.

So it is with a great sense of pride and accomplishment that we finish our year. Pride in the brave men and women of the LPS; and pride in the accomplishment in our governing achievements. We look forward to working together with the community and the LPS in 2016 to keep Lacombe a safe and vibrant community.

Jonathan Jacobson
Commission Chair

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Message from the Chief of Police



In partnership with the Lacombe Police Commission and the City of Lacombe, I am pleased to present the 2015 Annual Report to the community.

2015 proved to be a difficult and challenging year for many Alberta residents, families and businesses. Our economy experienced a significant downturn and many Albertans found themselves out of work. When the economy is bad, crime generally gets worse and as evidenced by the annual Crime Statistics released by Statistics Canada, Alberta experienced an alarming increase in all types of crime in 2015. Lacombe sadly was not immune to this trend with a 32% increase in our crime severity index.

Crime is a complex issue that seldom has a simple cause or solution. There are definitely those persons in our society who have no respect for the law, other citizens or their property, however, with our current economy; individuals and families struggling to cope; people living with mental health issues; people battling addictions; affordable housing; and a myriad of other factors - all serve to contribute to root causes of crime. How we, as your police service respond to these complex causes and the ever changing needs of our community in both good times and bad, means we must constantly adapt and evolve with the emerging trends. We are always looking for innovative, collaborative and effective strategies that offer the best solutions for our community.

Keeping Lacombe the safe community we want is a vision we all share, but it is also a shared responsibility. To realize this vision, we all must be prepared to do our part which starts with basic prudent measures to keep our families and homes safe, getting to know our neighbours, and being vigilant in our neighbourhoods. Engaged citizens who are willing to get involved, can, and do make a difference.

Two Alberta police officers lost their lives in 2015 through the violent acts of criminals. The escalation of violence towards police officers, including five separate incidents of Lacombe police vehicles being rammed by criminals attempting to avoid apprehension is alarming. Our members and staff consistently serve through sometimes stressful and often challenging issues. I am committed to ensuring they have the training and tools they need to perform their duties effectively as well as the support they need for their mental readiness and wellness. I am extremely proud to work with these men and women and it continues to be our privilege to serve the citizens of Lacombe.

T. Steve Murray
Chief of Police

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Human Resources



In 2015 we experienced some staffing changes as three police officers and one support team member resigned for other opportunities. All vacancies were filled by early 2016 with Cst. Girard, Cst. Geleyne and Cst. Healey joining the LPS team along with Ms. Layden on our administrative support side. The 2015 authorized staffing complement for LPS was:

- **17 sworn police officers**
- **5 civilian support staff**
- **Community Peace Officer**

This represents a “Police to Population’ ratio of 764 to 1, which is approximately 32% lower than the national average and 22% lower than the Alberta average.

In addition to our full time staff, LPS has five (5) casual/on-call guards to help ensure the safety and welfare of persons detained in our custody.

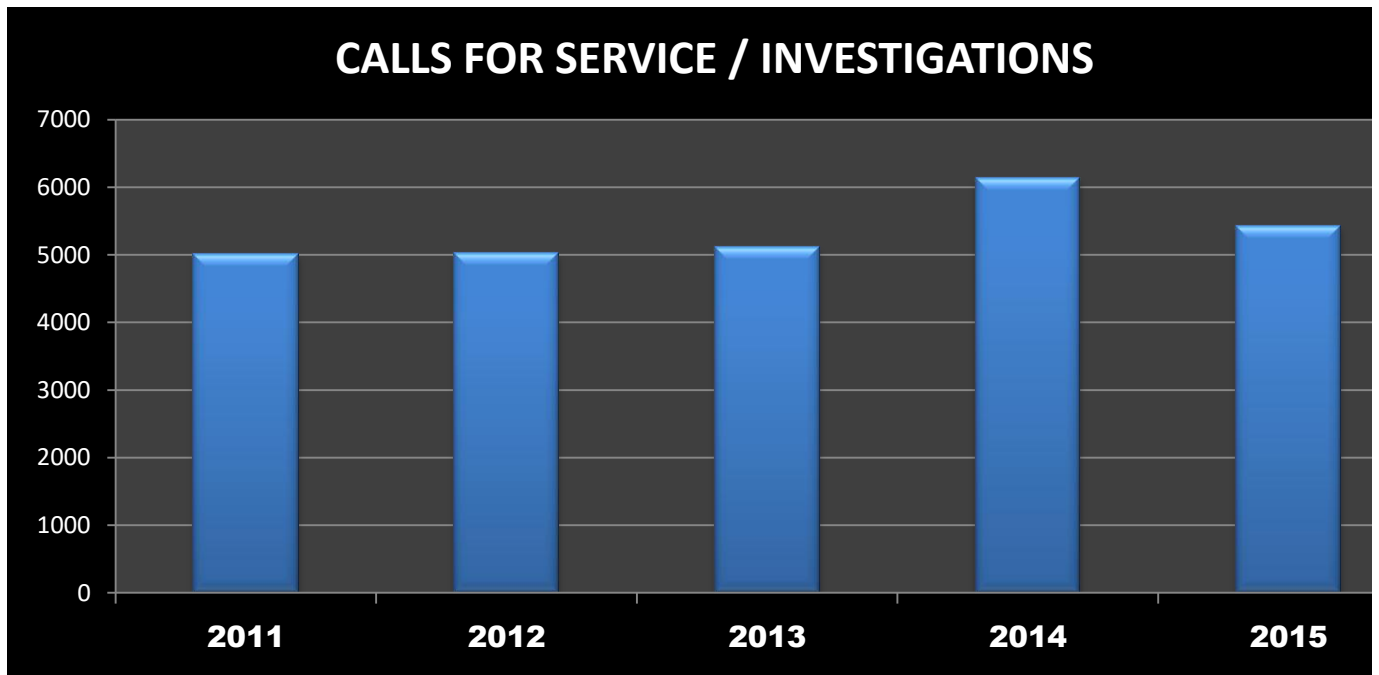
We are proud to partner with the volunteers who make up the board and advocates of the Lacombe Victim Services Unit. Victim Services is a police-based program that provides support, advocacy, information and referrals to victims of crime after the police have completed their investigation and provide an ongoing liaison through the eventual conclusion of the matter in the courts.

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Operational Highlights – Calls for Service



CALLS FOR SERVICE

2015 saw a **13% decrease** in Calls for Service more in line with our averages to 5,427 after a significant spike in 2014.

Even though our total number of calls decreased, the severity and complexity of those calls increased substantially which proved challenging on our resources. Extremely serious crimes including aggravated assaults and armed robberies as well as Lacombe's first homicide in over 25 years stretched our investigational capacity to its limit. As causes of crime become more complex and as police services become more integrated into the social fabric of society, this too increases the demand and diversity of the services we are called upon to provide to our community.

The Lacombe Police Service recognizes that effectively solving public and personal safety issues requires a holistic approach involving all necessary partner agencies or groups. By acknowledging our role as only one part of the solution, LPS continued to increase its engagement with other agencies in 2015.

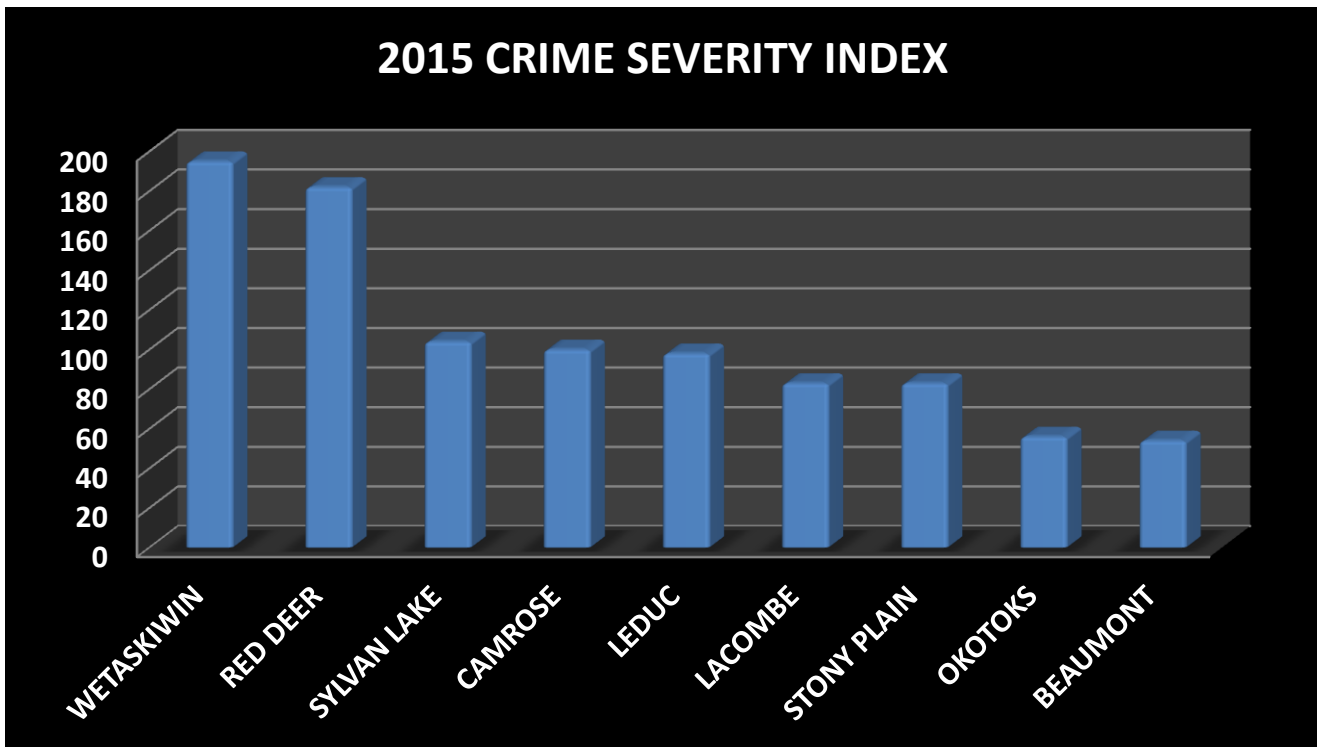


Operational Highlights – Crime Stats

CRIME STATS

In 2015, Lacombe experienced saw some discouraging trends in criminal occurrences:

- ↑ **PROPERTY CRIME (20%)**
- ↑ **CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS (5%)**
- ↑ **IMPAIRED DRIVING (18%)**
- ↑ **FAMILY DISPUTES (29%)**
- ↑ **DRUG CHARGES (74%)**
- ↑ **BREAK AND ENTERS (67%)**



Statistics Canada releases a Crime Severity Index (CSI) annually using 100 as the median. Communities with a CSI of less than 100 are considered to have less crime than the median average while those with a CSI greater than 100 have more crime.

Alberta as a whole, particularly central Alberta, experienced a significant increase in crime in 2015, as did most of our municipal neighbours. The CSI for the City of Lacombe *increased* 32% in 2015 from 63 to 83. While this is certainly alarming and disturbing, we remain a relatively safe community in comparison with other areas of the province.



Operational and Organizational Priorities

RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND EMERGING TRENDS

In 2015, we conducted a citizen survey to evaluate our performance and to gauge community perceptions and priorities about crime and community safety issues. The results showed that 80% of respondents felt our members were polite, courteous, helpful and professional while 73% felt we did a good job overall on the various functions we perform. One significant area of concern that was identified was our response times to reported crime which has an impact on all aspects of what we do including criminal apprehension, crime solve rates, crime prevention and community confidence.

The survey respondents felt our policing priorities should be:

1. Crimes against persons
2. Drugs
3. Impaired Drivers
4. Property crime
5. Traffic safety
6. Frauds and scams

As we saw the increasing and emerging crime trends central Alberta was experiencing, we realized we needed to re-evaluate our Policing Performance and Business Plan to not only reflect these citizen priorities, but also to properly respond to the new realities of how crime was impacting Lacombe.

Over the next three years (2016-2018), we have identified strategies to achieve the following priorities and goals:

1. **REDUCE CRIME AND VICTIMIZATION**
 - 1.1 *Violent Crime*
 - 1.2 *Domestic Violence*
 - 1.3 *Property Crime*
 - 1.4 *Overall reduction in Crime Severity Index*
2. **STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**
 - 2.1 *Crime Prevention and Education*
 - 2.2 *Youth Safety and Empowerment*
3. **IMPROVED RESPONSE, SERVICE AND ACCESSIBILITY**
 - 3.1 *Reduce Response to Call Times*
 - 3.2 *Improve Customer Service Hours and Accessibility at Police Station*



Operational and Organizational Priorities

RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND EMERGING TRENDS

4. IMPROVE TRAFFIC SAFETY

4.1 Reduce Fatal and Injury Collisions

5. RECRUITING, SELECTION AND RETENTION OF QUALITY STAFF

5.1 Build a reputation as an employer of choice and select highest calibre applicants

5.2 Provide ongoing development and training, support and mentorship

6. EXCELLENCE IN POLICING

6.1 Improve clearance (solve) rates

6.2 Maintain highest compliance with professional standards

7. FEES FOR SERVICE / COST RECOVERY

7.1 Review services provided and fees charged to ensure they are reasonable and appropriate

To help us achieve results in each of these key priorities, the Lacombe Police Service will undergo some of the most significant changes in our organizational history. With the support and commitment of the Lacombe Police Commission and the City of Lacombe, a new police facility will be opened in the Fall of 2016 which, along with our human resourcing model, will allow us to implement several new strategies that will directly and positively impact the service we deliver to Lacombe residents, including:

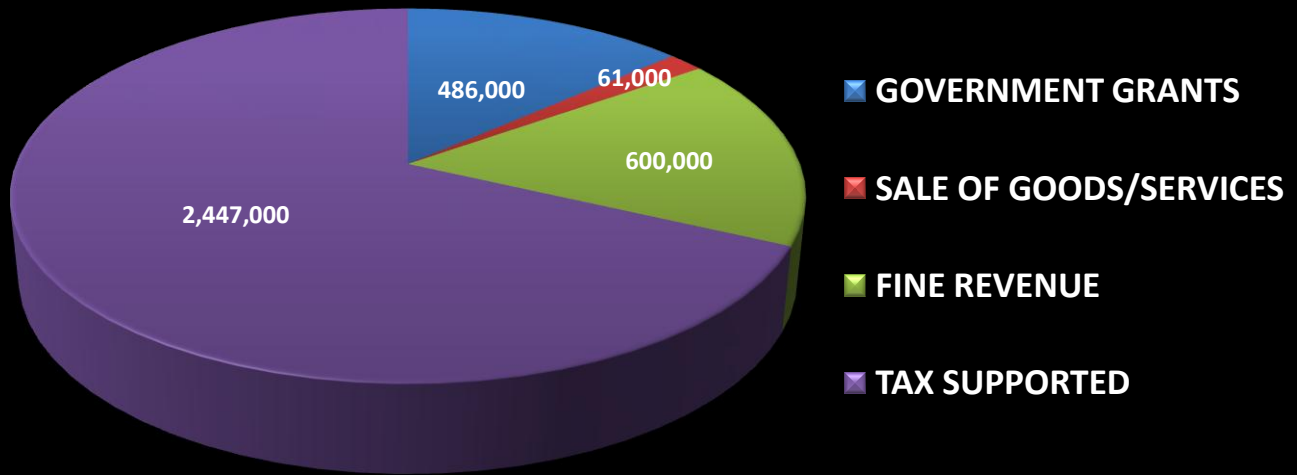
Improved parking, barrier free accessibility, expanded front counter customer service hours, local call answering and police dispatch, new province wide radio communication system and local identification services for Criminal Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector Searches



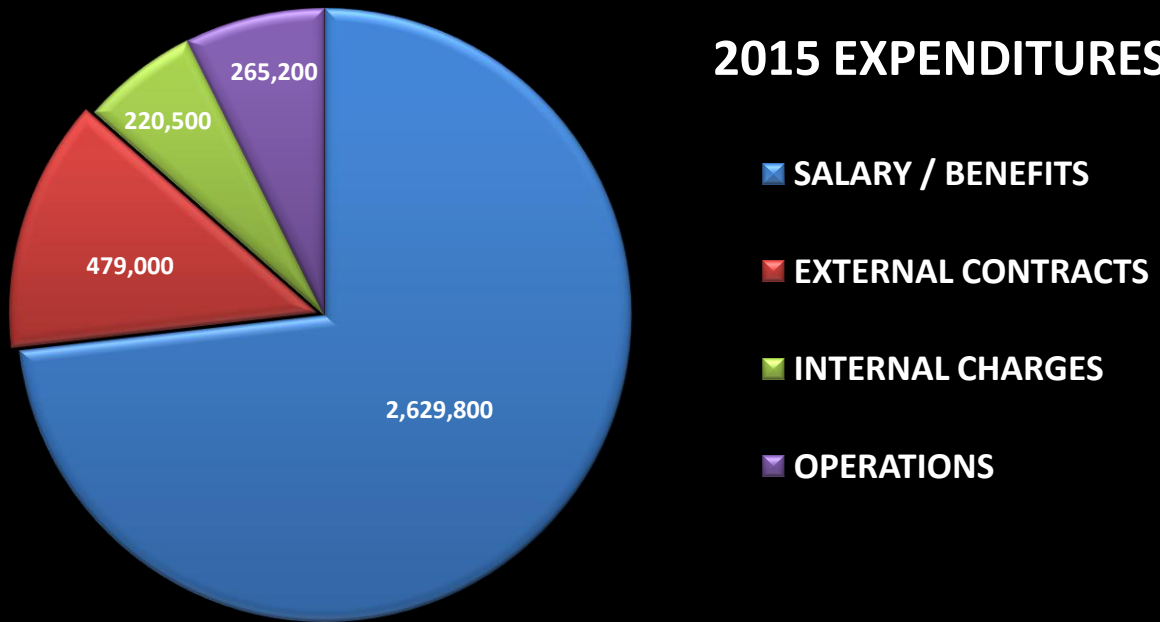


Budget – Revenue and Expenditures

2015 REVENUE SOURCES



2015 EXPENDITURES





Professional Standards – Complaints, Concerns, Compliments

Police officers are not only in positions of authority, they are more importantly in positions of trust. Through our own internal policies and processes, as well as provincial legislation, we hold police officers to the highest legal and ethical standards. When one of our members does not live up to these expectations, whether as a result of a public complaint or an internal review, we investigate the matter, or cause it to be investigated by an independent agency with a view to not only holding people accountable for their actions, but also to provide us with opportunities for learning and best practices.

The Lacombe Police Commission monitors the public complaints process, handles complaints regarding the Chief of Police, and handles appeals regarding the policies of, or services provided by, the Lacombe Police Service. The Lacombe Police Commission and LPS track all citizen complaints and concerns.

Under the Alberta *Police Act*, the responsibility for the investigation of complaints against Police Service policies or service provided, as well as against specific police officers lies with the Chief of Police. The Police Commission is the civilian body which is empowered to oversee the complaints process and act as the appeal body for complaints regarding the policies of, or services provided by, the Lacombe Police Service. The Lacombe Police Commission has a Public Complaint Director who:

- **Provides an independent review of the citizen complaints process of the Lacombe Police Service;**
- **Monitors the Police Service investigation of public complaints to ensure the investigations are impartial, fair, thorough and timely;**
- **Reports his or her findings directly to the Lacombe Police Commission;**
- **Makes public presentations to interested groups concerning the complaint process; and**
- **Receives complaints from the public.**

The purpose of the complaint process is to resolve issues between citizens and the Lacombe Police Service in a fair, transparent and reasonable manner. In 2015, LPS received two (2) complaints against police officers, both of which were resolved through mediation or operational guidance. We initiated our own internal review of the actions of two officers arising out of an incident even though there was no public complaint which resulted in operational guidance. We received four (4) concerns about our service levels, all of which pertained to response times and have been addressed through the dispatch report/recommendations.

We always welcome your comments, feedback or concerns. We can be reached in person, by phone or by email: 5211-50 Ave, Lacombe, AB T4L1E8; (403)782-3279; police@lacombe.ca

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Community Involvement

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Thanks to our continued partnership with Wolf Creek Public Schools and Lacombe County, we are able to have a **School Resource Officer (SRO)** dedicated full time to all the public schools within the City. The primary role of the SRO is to build relationships with the students and staff to help foster a safe learning environment. The SRO delivers proactive and prevention programs well as investigates occurrences within the schools and serves as a resource for students, parents and staff.



KIDS N' KOPS

We were once again proud to partner with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Blackfalds RCMP and a dozen volunteers to offer our **KIDS N KOPS** program for the eighth year. This four day program has proven to be very successful and popular for the 24 young citizens we can accommodate each year and is an excellent opportunity for us to shed some light on the daily life of a police officer and build relationships with our youth.



CELEBRATING WITH OUR CITIZENS

Every year our members participate in events and celebrations with our residents throughout Lacombe. Events such as **Canada Day, Lacombe Days, Remembrance Day, Light up the Night, Santa Claus Parade**, are important opportunities for us to strengthen our partnership during good times. We are often invited to participate in prominent sporting events either as part of opening ceremonies or during medal presentations.



Our members participated in fundraisers by serving coffee, sitting in dunk-tanks and playing street hockey. We are proud to be part of this community, and grateful that we have the opportunity to engage with our citizens during positive and fun activities, not just during times of need or crisis.

