

Cremona looking to start up crime watch

BY Craig Lindsay, MVP Staff

CREMONA – With crime increasing in rural areas, a local councillor and deputy mayor is hoping to get a crime watch/citizens on patrol group started in the Village of Cremona.

Joseph Shi told the Gazette he has spoken with several residents and says the idea is well supported.

“Recently, there has been a lot of crime in rural areas including Cremona,” said Shi. “We have the same amount of police officers as we did 30 years ago despite having the population tripling.”

Shi said he thinks that criminals target smaller communities knowing that there is less police presence.

“We have break-ins and other

things,” he said. “Vehicle thefts. Recently we had a new business open less than two weeks it was broken into.”

Shi said many of the businesses in the village have been broken into. He is hoping regular patrols by citizens will help reduce the crime in the area.

“The police force is not good enough for our rural community,” he said. “We need to take matters into our own hands (and help out).”

The Village of Cremona is part of the Didsbury RCMP detachment jurisdiction, which also includes Big Prairie, Carstairs, Dogpound, Elkton, Garfield, Midway, Neapolis, Westcott and Zella.

The nearest rural crime watch is in Olds, which also covers Didsbury and Sundre. Didsbury and Carstairs both

have Citizens on Patrol groups with Olds just starting one up.

“We’ve asked police to come here and do more patrols and be more visible, but they say police policy is it’s not big enough,” said Shi. “The number of police still remains the same as 30 years ago.”

Shi is currently collecting names of residents who are interested in helping out.

“We need a Citizens on Patrol or Rural Crime Watch in this community so we can do patrols,” he said. “I’ve talked with people who are interested. When we start, each night two of us can drive around and do patrols. We wouldn’t do any citizen’s arrest. When we find anything, we would call police immediately.”

Shi said the number of evenings the group would patrol would depend on the number of volunteers. The group already has \$200 set aside by Cremona council to get started with.

“According to similar groups in surrounding areas, such groups can get special vehicle insurance,” he said. “By talking to local residents many would love to give support to such an effort. Groups like the Lions and the chamber think it’s a good thing for the community. We could all do fundraising for this. I hope that those who would like to see the area become safer will come out and join me.”

For more information call Shi at 403-616-4390.