

# The Lacombe Globe

## Police join forces to help keep roads safe

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By Heather Pickett  
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There was an excess of flashing red and blue lights for two days in town last week, as Lacombe officers teamed up with Alberta Commercial Vehicle Enforcement to check commercial vehicles travelling through town.

"Lacombe has two major transport routes, Hwy 12 and Hwy 2A that run through it, so we see a lot of commercial traffic," said Lacombe Police Chief Gary Leslie. "When we have the opportunity to bring in the guys from commercial vehicle enforcement, it's something we can't pass up. CheckStops like this are good for the community."

On Tuesday the CheckStop was set up on Hwy 12, on the west side of town, and on Wednesday was operated on Hwy 2A near the intersection with Wolf Creek Drive. Everything from gravel trucks to moving vans could be seen pulled over, with inspectors giving the vehicles a thorough look over. Inspectors checked everything from brakes to vents to drivers



Lacombe Globe/HEATHER PICKETT Cst. Mark Sproule, transport officer with Alberta Commercial Vehicle Enforcement, demonstrates how the thermal imaging unit is used by police to help detect problems in passing vehicles. While it is primarily used to detect bad brakes, the thermal imaging inspection system can also help to identify other wheel and tire-related issues. As vehicles pass by, the operator can see hot spots, anything that might pose a safety threat. He can then radio ahead and let the inspectors know which vehicles to take a look at and help pinpoint where issues are.

having the proper permits, Lacombe Cst. Brett Miller explained.

"We looked at all aspects of every vehicle that was pulled over," he said. "And with the thermal eye unit, we can catch things that can't be seen easily with just our eyes."

One of the newest tools available to law enforcement personnel is the Thermal Eye Inspection Unit, which was also in Lacombe during the CheckStop.

The use of thermal imaging, which picks up temperature variances on vehicles, is helping police in Alberta take dangerous trucks off the roads. With the new technology, officers are able to use more than just their eyes and instincts to figure out which trucks should be pulled over and inspected.

"While it is primarily used to detect bad brakes, the thermal imaging inspection system can also help to identify other wheel and tire-related issues like under-inflated tires," said Cst. Mark Sproule, transport officer with Alberta Commercial Vehicle Enforcement. "As vehicles pass by, the operator can see hot spots, anything that might pose a safety threat. He can then radio ahead and let the inspectors know which vehicles to take a look at and help them pinpoint where issues might be."

Sproule said the technology also helps keep traffic flowing through checkstops, as it allows the trucks that are in good working order to continue on their route.

"The thermal eye is a neat piece of equipment to have here," said Sproule. "The technology is such an asset to us in helping keep the roads safe. The system has a 98 per cent accuracy rate in identifying trucks with bad brakes, and while they aren't cheap units, I think it pays for itself when you look at some of the equipment we take off the road.

"There are too many accidents caused by faulty brakes and units functioning improperly, and with this kind of technology we have a chance to remove those vehicles from the roads before they cause an accident. You can't put a price tag on safety."

There are four thermal eye units in Canada, three of which are in Alberta.

By the end of the two days, more than 100 commercial vehicles were inspected.

"This year we had more vehicles pass compared to the results of similar checkstops last year," said Miller. "I think that's good news for us, for the industry and everyone who shares the roads."

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