

WE MUST NEVER LET OUR GUARD DOWN

During the entire year of 2013 Jewellers Vigilance Canada (JVC) saw a significant decrease in crime from the previous year. Crime itself was down 22% from 2012. JVC credited a lot of the decrease in crime by the enhanced awareness of the industry itself.

We must continue this fight against crime. So far in this current year we have had 6 major break in's to retail jewellery stores. Four in Western Canada; Calgary, Prince George, Port Coquitlam and Capilano Mall North Vancouver, and one in Toronto and one in Woodbridge just north of Toronto. Capilano Mall and Toronto both had vehicles driven through the doors of the store. In 2013 in all of Canada we only had 9 for the year. We are over half way there and it is only April!

In the robbery category we have had 7 reported so far this year with Southern Ontario suffering three, Calgary two and Edmonton and Saskatoon with one each. The alarming factor is the level of violence is increasing with victims being hit over the head with a hammer requiring medical attention in both Calgary robberies. These types of criminal acts will always receive a high degree of focus on the part of police. However the police can only do so much. The two Calgary robberies were committed by the same person, a female. After the first robbery which involved violence and injury to the victim, the courts, not the police, granted the suspect bail and she went out and did the same thing a second time at another jeweller. The police had to go out again and find this women and take her before the courts. This time she was held in custody.

Less serious property crimes such as grab and runs do not receive the same focus by police. Tighter budgets, increased administrative requirements on all types of investigations and the need for more officers on the streets equate to less investigator to handle less serious property crimes. This would then require the industry itself to try and pick-up some of the slack and assist law enforcement. How can we achieve this task? As in many situations we look south of the border to see what they are doing down there.

I recently attended a jewellery security seminar in Orlando, Florida along with two members of the Peel Regional Police. The main focus is networking not only with police but with members of the industry itself. I know I have mentioned this topic in numerous articles in the past but it is the key. Sharing information. A loss prevention department of a major chain south of the border gave a presentation on a serious rash of break-in (burglaries) that have been taking place mainly in Florida. Roof-top burglaries were the bandits are cutting a hole in the roof of the malls and dropping down into the store victimizing many different jewellery retailers in several police jurisdictions. This chain was taking the lead in gather as much information from all the incidents as possible, preparing spreadsheets and maps and disseminating all that information on a regular bases to police, so that all police jurisdictions were aware of all the occurrence throughout Florida and other States. If one jurisdiction was to make an arrest the

bandits would not be facing one charge of burglary for perhaps \$50,000 or \$60,000 in one city. They would be facing numerous charges for millions of dollars in many cities.

That's south of the border where they have many large jewellery chains with several employees dedicated to Loss Prevention. What about here in Canada. We have two jewellery chains that have LP people here in Canada. How can we perform such a task as correlating all jewellery crime? This is where JVC picks up the slack.

In 2012, JVC crime analyst Janet Lamont produced the first ever annual crime report for the year of 2011. This is now a yearly report. Jewelers Mutual Insurance indicated this information is invaluable and was not available anywhere in Canada prior to JVC developing this report. JVC has developed a large network of Police and jewellers sharing information by JVC alerts. Alerts that have prevented crime in many circumstances. JVC is building coalitions of Police officers in different parts of the country. In the recent break-ins in British Columbia JVC sent an alert to Coalition members in Port Coquitlam. The officer then requested permission from JVC to disseminate that information to all police Crime Analyst throughout the lower mainland of BC. Permission was of course granted.

This system works. Be part of the solution and join JVC.

John Lamont, Director of Crime Prevention, JVC