

An RCMP Community Band of Pipes and Drums for the National Capital Region (NCR)

What

- ***A new tartan and kilted uniform.*** On April 15th this year, the Commissioner and the Force's Senior Executive Committee (SEC) received and adopted recommendations from the 125th Anniversary Tartan Subcommittee. After a full year of extensive cross-country consultation and deliberation, a tartan was chosen for the RCMP, along with a uniform for pipers and drummers. The kilted uniform, with a modified red serge tunic, is to be worn by RCMP community band participants, including regular members, employees and citizens. On June 15th, Princess Anne presented the official Certificate of Registration of the Force's new tartan to the Commander Atlantic Region in Fredericton. On July 1st, a first-ever composite band of pipes and drums performed at the Nova Scotia International Tattoo. Comprised of volunteer serving members and civilians from BC, Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the band had the honour of parading for the first time, wearing the new RCMP tartan and modified red serge uniform.
- ***The coming of community bands.*** A community band of pipes and drums will be formed in the National Capital Region (NCR) over the course of this Fall and Winter. This will be the third such group in existence within the Force. Edmonton RCMP formed the first community band in 1992 with the support of their Commanding Officer as a 'Canada 125' initiative. The RCMP recently adopted a community band on assuming policing responsibility for Moncton, NB, and surrounding region.

Why

- ***Community Policing in Action.*** Characteristically, the Force does not enjoy the same presence and profile in its federal divisions (Ontario and Quebec) as it does in the contract divisions. This is a perfect opportunity to demonstrate community policing in a federal division. Community bands, because they are formed of both police and citizenry, manifest the principle of 'police and community working together'.

- ***A Model of Citizen Participation.*** The model works. Police pipe bands have been in existence throughout the Commonwealth for much of this century. With one notable exception (Strathclyde Police, Scotland, which maintains a professional competition band), these bands are formed of police and citizen volunteers, typically because there are not sufficient police musicians available. There are approximately two hundred members of the RCMP (pipers and drummers) across Canada: many playing as ‘citizen volunteers’ with other community bands. Without exception, police community bands have adopted a modified kilted uniform, derived from their Force’s significant dress uniform.

When

- ***An Ambitious Schedule.*** Permission has been sought from the Commanding Officer of “A” Division to form an RCMP community band to serve the NCR and surrounding area. As noted, the band will form and commence practice over the course of this Fall and Winter, with a performance schedule planned for the Spring and Summer of 1999. It is an ambitious schedule for an organization that will be ‘starting from scratch’, but entirely possible with the degree of partnership already established in the local community.

Where

- ***Aligned to local demand and regional potential.*** The NCR band will form in Ottawa and respond to requests/demand for ceremonial & civic functions. The RCMP will be one of several clients of the band. There is potential for an NCR band to serve the broader interests of the Central Region, travelling and performing within the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal corridor. Due to proximity to the National Headquarters, there is also the potential for international travel, as emissaries of the Canadian government.

Who

- ***A Unique Partnership with the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police.*** The band will form around a core group of serving/retired members and employees of the Force in the Ottawa area. In partnership with the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Pipes & Drums, the RCMP core group will begin practice this Fall. The RCMP and Ottawa Police will share practice facilities and work from a common musical repertoire. The Ottawa Police will provide ‘guest players’ to augment the RCMP core group during its initial year of practice and performance. The RCMP band will be under the direction and leadership of a regular member of the RCMP, with musical guidance and mentorship provided by the Ottawa Police.

How

- ***Empowered by the Commanding Officer.*** The band will be formed with the permission of, and accountable to, the Commanding Officer "A" Division. The C.O. may appoint a 'band officer' to guide and support the activities of the band. The band will form a management committee, to be comprised of (at least) one serving member of the RCMP. The band committee is typically comprised of the Pipe Major, Drum Major, secretary/treasurer and other positions as deemed appropriate. The quality of performance, dress, drill and deportment are the domain of the Pipe and Drum Majors, reporting through the band committee to the CO, as and when required.

How Much

- ***Pursuing Sponsorship.*** While there is considerable enthusiasm surrounding this initiative, there is no public money available to support the formation or maintenance of the band. Start-up expenses, including the cost of purchasing and tailoring uniform, will have to be underwritten from monies found through sponsorship. Commensurate with the Force's national policy, a sponsorship strategy is being put in place to assure that sufficient funding is available to field a functioning community band by the Spring of 1999.

Related Initiatives

- ***Vocal accompaniment and Highland Dancers.*** The Nation's Capital presents a broad and diverse range of performance venues. Once established, the band fully anticipates the need to expand its performance repertoire to include both vocal accompaniment and choreographed highland dance. Experience has shown that such an ensemble of Celtic performing arts is in high demand and exceptionally well received by the public. To this end, work is well underway to attract the best talent available and to secure a commitment towards future partnership, once funding is in place.

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