

Chamber planning seminar on how to fight crime

BY DOUG COLLIE
MVP Staff

The Olds & District Chamber of Commerce is arranging a seminar to provide local businesses with tips on how to deal with armed robberies, thefts and other crimes.

Chamber president Doug Rieberger made that announcement during an interview with the Albertan.

Rieberger said the exact date, place and time for that event has not yet been set, but he's hoping it'll be held in the spring.

"We're hoping to have it as soon as possible, but we do have to time it with the schedule of our speakers, etc., for it," he said.

Rieberger said the chamber began work on arranging the seminar a couple of weeks or so ago.

He said it wasn't necessarily spurred by a recent armed robbery and another attempted one as well as several break-ins and thefts.

However, those occurrences have heightened concern among chamber officials, business owners and staff, not to mention local residents in general.

An attempted armed robbery occurred Feb. 4 at Our Flames Restaurant and Lounge, and an armed robbery of Panago Pizza occurred Jan. 30.

Other incidents include a break-in at the Easyhome furniture and equipment rentals/lease store Feb. 1, which

involved smashing a jeep into the front doors a couple of times, and various other business and residential break-ins, vehicle thefts, and suspicious activities, all of which are under investigation by Olds RCMP.

Rieberger said some local business owners/managers have contacted the Olds chamber to express their concern about those activities.

They've also said they're working on upgrading their security in the wake of those incidents.

"We do know some businesses that have talked about increasing their surveillance cameras; increasing security procedures, those types of things, to cut down on theft," Rieberger said.

He urged business people to report any thefts or suspicious activities that occur on their premises, no matter how inconsequential they may seem.

"From the chamber's side of it, the biggest thing that we can do, even if it's a small amount or a small incident, make sure that it's reported to the RCMP because that way, the information can get out to the rest of the community," Rieberger said.

Rieberger was asked if the thefts and armed robbery incidents are a result of the current downturn in the economy.

"I can't speculate on that directly, but I do feel that there seems to be a correlation between what has been happening in the economy and what's been happening with the increase in crime," he said.

dcollie@olds.greatwest.ca