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Boats could be bait as anti-theft program expands

By [Andrea Klassen - Nelson Star](#)

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The Nelson police have some new toys to tackle vehicle theft in the city.

In addition to cars and trailers announced last month, the Nelson Police Department will also have access to ATVs, motorbikes and boats equipped with GPS tracking technology. RCMP officers from other parts of the region visited the city Wednesday to train with the various vehicles, as the Integrated Municipal Auto Crime Team's bait program rolls out across the Kootenays.

The Kootenay region is the last to get access to the provincial program — mainly because auto theft isn't a major issue here.

"There's a very low crime rate here, and that's to the credit of the RCMP and the Nelson police, and the community members themselves," police chief Wayne Holland told local media.

"However, your dollars — your and my premiums to ICBC — that's what funds specialized programs like IMPACT, so the citizens of Nelson, we deserve these programs around us."

Under the program, various vehicles are placed where they're likely to be stolen, often with keys in the ignition, doors open, or valuables piled in plain sight. But should anyone make off with the vehicle, they'll be tracked by police dispatchers and, in some cases, videotaped by hidden cameras.

"If there's someone from Nelson who engages in thefts of cars, we know where they live and where they frequent, so we will put the bait out for them," says Holland.

"What this is going to do is create such a heightened sense of risk that any time somebody wants to steal one of these items now, it might be bait," adds IMPACT's Sgt. Gord Elias. "And the fear of the unknown is what actually reduces the crime."

While auto thefts don't account for much of Nelson's



Nelson police chief Wayne Holland says new 'bait' motorcycles, boats and recreational vehicles should deter thefts, as well as other types of crime.

Andrea Klassen

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crime, RCMP say recreational vehicle theft is a larger problem in the rural areas, and the bait equipment will help.

"Certainly the trailers, the boats, the ATVs, the snowmobiles have been a problem for us in the past," Insp. Nick Romanchuk, says. "This is an excellent tool for us to be able to use to deal with that type of crime."

Holland says the program can also reduce other types of crime, because it shows "that the RCMP here, the Nelson police and the community are very strong, so no matter what their criminal enterprise [people] are considering, it's best to move on to another location that doesn't have such strong programs."

A bait bicycle program is also expected to be rolled out in the region in the coming months.

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