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First week of rural school zones yields some shocking statistics!

While the students were back to hit the books, County Peace Officers and RCMP Enhanced policing members hit the school zones. A total of 44 school zones were patrolled during the first week of school with officers laying 48 charges, primarily for speed offences.

The number of charges laid during the first week was quite high compared to past years, though no-where comparable to the higher traffic volume and violations that occur within the city. However, the large number of high flyers that were detected ignoring both the normal posted speed limit and the school zone signage was shocking.

Sgt. Stu Rempel of the County's Enforcement Services Department advises that during the first five days of school, officers found the unusually high speed offences of 111, 89, 87, and 84km/hr in clearly posted 30km/hr school zones. "These are 81, 59, 57, and 54 km/hr over the limit respectively – nearly 3 times the allowable limit and in one case nearly 4" Rempel stated. "On one occasion, one of our RCMP members was setting up in a zone and detected a vehicle travelling at 100 km/hr. It was only minutes before the school zone came into effect but it was still double the legally posted speed limit and children were in the area."

Sadly, it is impossible to have an officer in every school zone on every school day. This is why Peace Wapiti Public School Division has partnered with groups like the County of Grande Prairie to lobby the province to allow electronic speed enforcement signs to be placed at strategic locations within rural schools. The signs electronically display the speed of an oncoming and have been shown to be effective in getting the attention of motorists and thereby reducing the incidence of speeding.

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