

Impaired driving

LEGAL CANNABIS COINCIDES WITH 55% INCREASE IN IMPAIRED CHARGES LAID BY SARNIA POLICE

TROY SHANTZ
THE JOURNAL

A citizen noticed a vehicle swerving back and forth as it headed north on Indian Road on Oct. 26 and called police.

Officers located it a short distance away, and a 28-year-old driver gave a breath sample four times over the legal limit for alcohol.

Early the next morning, a vehicle climbed a curb on Exmouth and rammed a pole, cutting power to part of the city.

Again, officers tracked it down and charged a 26-year-old with driving while impaired.

Despite years of public education, emotional MADD campaigns and increasingly stiff financial penalties, impaired driving charges have soared in Sarnia this year.

City police charged 45 people with impaired offences over the first nine months of this year, said Const. John Sottosanti — a 55% increase over the same period in 2018.

The focus has shifted from drunk drivers to drivers who consume both alcohol and cannabis before getting behind the wheel.

Sarnia Police added two drug recognition experts (DRE) this year, officers trained to run suspect drivers through a 12-step test.

Impaired driving on city streets is “through the roof,” said Const. Shawn Urban, who until this year was the department’s only DRE.

“I don’t have any evidence to say it’s because of (cannabis) legalization, but ironically after legalization there was a big spike,” he said.

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Just so



KURTIS BARKER, A seasonal arbourist with the city, places the star atop this year’s Christmas tree at City Hall on Nov. 19. The 40-foot Norway spruce, the crane and the flatbed truck used to transport the tree were all donated to maintain the annual tradition, said Mayor Mike Bradley.

TROY SHANTZ The Journal

Higher earning

LAMBTON COLLEGE HAS BECOME A POWERHOUSE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, AND IS REAPING THE BENEFITS

TROY SHANTZ
THE JOURNAL

More than 1,200 international students are now taking classes at the Sarnia campus of Lambton College, a twelfold increase in 10 years.

But that’s just part of the story.

Lambton also has signed licensing agreements to train about 7,000 additional international students at offsite and overseas campuses in Toronto, Mississauga and China.

One of them, the privately owned Cestar College in Toronto (see related story on page 3), recently made the news by giving the City of Sarnia the eyebrow-raising sum of \$4 million for a new shipping dock.

The agreements are highly lucrative for Lambton College because foreign students pay hefty tuition than Canadians — an average \$14,000 a year according to the Ontario Colleges website.


In its last fiscal year, Lambton took in revenue of \$49 million from international students, according to an audited financial statement in March.

That’s twice as much as it received from Canadian students through tuition and government grants.

Attracting students from India, Mexico, China, Brazil and Jamaica has been so positive that Lambton College posted a budget surplus of \$25 million last year, as well as cash in hand of \$125 million, president Judy Morris confirmed.

“When this kind of revenue comes to our college it is put back right into the college, and it is absolutely to ensure that we have the most attractive and competitive college that we possibly can,” she said.

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Local

Higher:

Continued from 1

Of Ontario's 24 community colleges, Lambton is one of just six with licensing arrangements that allow their international students to be trained at private colleges.

Canadore, Cambria, St. Lawrence, St. Clair and Northern Colleges have similar licensing agreements, Morris said, adding it gives rural colleges a chance to respond to shrinking domestic tuition dollars.

Lambton was quick to realize the potential and become a leader at licensing its programs. In addition to the international students training in Sarnia, another 5,700 are earning Lambton College credits at Cestar College and Queen's College in Mississauga.

Lambton was just the third Canadian college allowed into the People's Republic of China. Today, it has 1,100 students studying at Jilin University-Lambton College in Changchun.

It also has an agreement with

Jiangnan University-North American College in Wuxi, China, Morris said.

In 2018, Ontario's previous Liberal government told Lambton it and the other licensing colleges they must wind down their private college partnerships and end them once currently enrolled students graduated.

But on Nov. 12, Colleges and Universities Minister Ross Romano said the Ford government was lifting the licensing moratorium.

The new policy will allow other colleges to partner with private schools and train foreign students for careers in business, technology, mechanical engineering and computer programming.

"It's a very positive announcement for us and we are extremely pleased with our government for doing this," Morris said.

Lambton has no plans to increase its international student intake, Morris said, but the licensing will continue and with it the substantial revenue.

International graduates with a diploma from Lambton are



HARDIK DELVADIYA, AN international student from India, seen working in the robotics lab at Lambton College.

Glenn Ogilvie file photo

well positioned, the college says, to join the Canadian workforce, network, or further their education elsewhere in North America.

At the Sarnia campus, the number of foreign students has grown to more than 1,200 from just 93 students in 2009, Morris said.

Over the same period, Canadian full-time student enrolment in Sarnia declined to about 2,400 this year from 2,900 a decade ago.

College's partnership deal brought windfall to city

TROY SHANTZ
THE JOURNAL

When Sarnia announced recently Cestar College was donating \$4 million to help build the Sarnia-Lambton oversized load corridor it prompted head scratching locally.

Why would a private college in Toronto give so much money to a city 300 kilometres away? Especially when the school's only tangible return is to have a new wharf at Sarnia Harbour

named "Cestar Dock."

The Cestar College of Business, Health and Technology was founded as a private career college in 2007. Three years later it signed a partnership agreement with Lambton College and began training Lambton students at its 35,000-square-foot Toronto campus.

Cestar director Adrian Sharma said the school is currently training 3,500 international students using Lambton's licensed program material. According to its website, Cestar offers four programs and 11 courses.

"We've had a good relationship that's worked out for both of us," said Sharma, adding the \$4-million gift is meant as a symbol of Cestar's connection to Sarnia.

"It's a philanthropic donation. We're looking at an eight year-plus relationship (with Lambton College)," he said.

Sharma said he met several times with Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley and Ontario Infrastructure Ministry officials to discuss the donation. Lambton College had no say in it, he said.

Before settling on the heavy load corridor, other potential

projects were discussed, including a building for student housing, a library, and a community centre, Sharma said.

Each was rejected because of the ongoing operating costs Sarnia would be responsible for, he said.

While international students at Cestar are attending a private college they are Lambton College students and pay public college tuition and fees, which are significantly lower than private college costs, Sharma said.

"The students who are at the Toronto campus here... they

actually belong to Lambton College. So we have a relationship with Lambton College directly where we train their students - their international ones," said Sharma.

"It's a unique arrangement."

According to Lambton's website, that arrangement offers visiting students a chance to study in a large city with access to a different job market.

Students can transfer to the Sarnia campus within the first 10 days of their program, with special permission from Lambton's dean of international education.



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