



**Cpl. Patrick Webb
in the RCMP
Volkswagen
Beetle cruiser.**

*Photo by
Veronica Russell,
Prairie Girl
Photography*

Webb, a 19-year veteran of the Force, is in charge of Community Policing, Victim Services, Crime Prevention, Restorative Justice and is the Media Liaison for the Southern Alberta District. He oversees the Beetle's schedule and books it for community events within the district.

It's popular — 30 bookings have been made for the summer months and the car will appear in locations like High River, Cochrane, Canmore, and of course, the Calgary Stampede.

Webb estimates the vehicle has been seen by more than 70,000 people — many of them witnessing it lead the Calgary Santa Claus parade last December.

It also earned its keep performing other winter duties.

"It's gone out to a couple of checkpoints during the Christmas season," he said.

Previously, the RCMP would use a regular police car, the trademark red serge outfit or even a flashing dashboard light to attract attention at events, but it was felt a change was needed.

"Some things get worn out," Webb said.

A retired member of the Force from Calgary saw a picture of a Beetle used as a police car and it was decided to try the idea locally. Northland Volkswagen of Calgary leased the

car to the RCMP at no cost for one year. They own the car, but it is registered to the RCMP. It was outfitted with emergency roof lights, compliments of Kee-Lock Security, a radio, public address system and the RCMP stripes and decals.

Webb says the partnership between sponsoring corporations and the RCMP benefits both.

"It's a win-win situation," he says. "We're putting this to a good use for us ... for them it's a bonus because they're getting their name out corporately."

Webb points to a similar program at the North Vancouver Detachment. The Detachment sports four community service vehicles, a Volkswagen Beetle, a Jeep Cherokee, a Mercedes Benz sport utility vehicle and an Audi car. He thinks the district is more affluent than most and dealers want to donate vehicles to appeal to the upper-class homeowners.

However, Webb doesn't think that a fancy vehicle is always necessary stating:

"It's not so much the idea of what car it is, but how effective it is."

He's just as happy to stick with the Beetle.

"Kids recognize it and adults recognize it. It really attracts that attention."

There was a lot of attention on Mar. 29 when Webb made a trip to a kindergarten to grade 9 school in Kathryn, Alberta, a small village about 25 minutes northeast of Calgary. Pulling out of the RCMP parking lot and waiting to turn left onto 16th Ave N.E., the stares and smiles start to come from fellow drivers. Webb is careful to remind officers driving the car they are on display — especially their driving habits.

At a light, a sleek black Subaru car pulls up beside the Volkswagen. The driver, a well-dressed man in a suit, smiles but stays