

## Learning about fire prevention straight from the horse's mouth



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By Kristena Schutt-Moore

Those living on the side roads in the Townships of Limerick and Wollaston got a special treat during Sunday, Aug. 9 and Monday, Aug. 10. Fire prevention officer with the two townships, Cindy Fuerth, and other riders with the Ontario Mounted Special Service Unit toured the area with their four-legged partners to talk about fire safety and prevention.

This is Fuerth's second annual riding tour. She started it as a way to reach more people about the risks of a fire and how to best plan for an emergency situation. This year she brought members of the volunteer OMSSU to help talk with people and help hand out information pamphlets, safety colouring books for children and information packages for seniors. One of this year's riders is Ontario Quarter Horse Hero award winner Lisa Ruth, a nurse with the Victorian Order of Nurses who works to insure that area services and personal support workers have the proper personal protective equipment.

"Innovative methods help get the messages across," explained Fuerth. "People gravitate to the horses. So they come out to talk. They want to pet the horses and they are willing to talk longer."

The horses, Fuerth and the rest of the OMSSU volunteers train with the Toronto Police so the horses are well adapted for service work, trained for working with people and crowds and of course, love the attention. Acting fire chief Scott Reid hopes that people will see that the department is working to improve fire safety and prevention in the community, "And we want everyone to enjoy their time here and stay safe and sound. The public enjoy seeing the horses and they seem to enjoy doing it so it is a great way to get the word about fire safety out."