

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020 - 2021

**ALERT**



KEEPING ALBERTA COMMUNITIES SAFE



# KEEPING ALBERTA COMMUNITIES SAFE

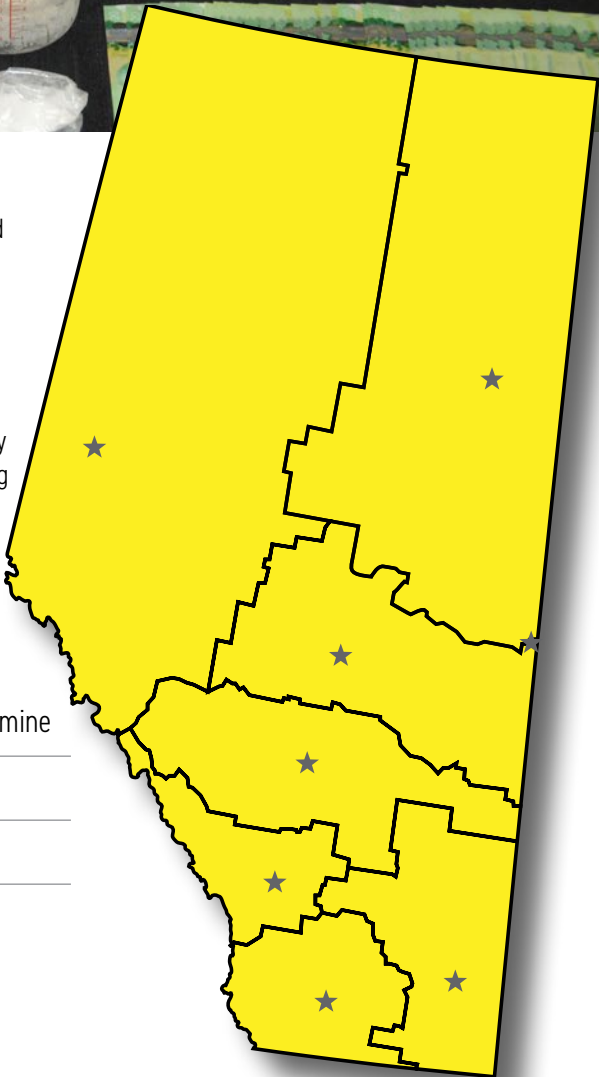


**ALERT WAS ESTABLISHED** by the provincial government in 2006 to bring together the province’s most sophisticated law enforcement resources to combat organized and serious crime. Integrated teams specialize in the areas of organized crime and gangs, online child exploitation, criminal intelligence, and law enforcement training.

Over 400 police and civilian staff work together, and are based in eight communities across the province. The Alberta Government funds the majority of these positions with ALERT also receiving funding via the Provincial Police Service Agreement. An additional 54 positions are contributed by ALERT’s partner agencies, including: Calgary Police, Edmonton Police, Lethbridge Police, Medicine Hat Police, RCMP Federal policing program, and the municipalities of Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lloydminster and Red Deer.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Statement of ALERT Chief Executive Officer

**ALERT CONTINUES TO ADAPT** to the changing nature of serious and organized crime threats facing Albertans.

In the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic, people from across the globe drastically altered their daily lives, routines, customs, and social behaviours. The same can be said for organized crime. Border closures, social distancing requirements, and economic downturns created instability amongst criminal networks.

The integrated and dedicated nature of ALERT allowed us to be versatile, in a time of global uncertainty, and to respond to these rapidly shifting dynamics. Along with a series of new initiatives and resources, the past year marked an evolution of ALERT.

ALERT's expansion was realized through support from the Alberta Government, and came in a series of new initiatives, units, resources, and partnerships.

Our Annual Report shares the progress of these new initiatives, and demonstrates the collective success ALERT is having in keeping Alberta communities safe. I'm proud to highlight some of these accomplishments:

- ALERT organized crime teams continue to protect community safety and have taken more than **\$6.5 million worth of harmful drugs** off the street, and seized **98 firearms**;
- Doubled the size of ICE unit to meet the staggering number of new case referrals, which has surged during the pandemic and accounted for a **41% increase** from the year prior;
- The launch of Human Trafficking and Counter Exploitation teams resulted in **18 victim interventions** where specialized referrals, rescues, and/or trauma care was provided;
- More than **\$7 million in stolen vehicles** was recovered by the upstart Auto Crimes Unit, as they collaborate with industry partners to disrupt vehicle theft, cloning, revinning, and frauds;
- Meanwhile, the newly formed Southwest Regional Property Crimes Unit recovered nearly **\$800,000 in stolen property** – which is often used to finance drug additions;
- Sixty candidates were trained on ALERT's implementation of new test-firing procedures, which will better support **successful prosecutions in gun crimes**;
- Sixty candidates were trained on ALERT's implementation of **new Section 2 test-firing procedures**, and ALERT established the foundation of a provincial **Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS) lab**;



While drug trafficking remains the primary commodity of organized crime, these highlights demonstrate the diversification of ALERT's business interests to include financial crimes, organized theft, property offences, human trafficking, firearms, and fraud.

I'm proud of the team we have assembled. The men and women who make up ALERT represent such a variety of skill sets and professional expertise. Their ingenuity and dedication foreshadows even bigger results in the coming year.

Of course, ALERT's success could not be realized without the contributions of our policing partners. This co-operative approach to policing has proven to be an extremely successful model, especially as the criminal landscape evolves and pushes beyond local and regional boundaries.

I want to close by acknowledging the Alberta Government's continued support of ALERT. Their financial commitment will enable ALERT to deliver a more robust response to serious and organized crime in Alberta. I look forward to much success for 2021 and beyond.

Supt. Dwayne Lakusta, ALERT CEO

# PARTNERSHIPS

The strength of the ALERT model lies in the integration of members from various agencies who have expertise in intelligence, enforcement, and support services.

**ALERT'S CO-OPERATIVE APPROACH TO POLICING** has proven to be an extremely successful model, especially as the criminal landscape evolves and pushes beyond local and regional boundaries. ALERT is a non-profit agency that is governed by a Board of Directors and an appointed Chief Executive Officer. This unique designation allows ALERT to remain arm's length from the provincial government. A Civilian Advisory Committee also provides and enhanced opportunity for community engagement and stakeholder relations.

## POLICING PARTNERS

ALERT is governed by a Board of Directors that is responsible for the **HIGH-LEVEL STRATEGIC DIRECTION**. ALERT's Board of Directors is represented by the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police and the Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Justice and Solicitor General.



## CIVILIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ALERT's Civilian Advisory Committee was **CREATED IN APRIL 2018** and is comprised of representatives from the Alberta Association of Police Governance, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Rural Municipalities of Alberta.

**Janet-Sue Hamilton, Chair** • Edmonton Police Commission  
**Christopher Clark, Vice-Chair** • Lac La Biche Protective Services  
**Marilyn North Peigan** • Calgary Police Commission  
**Ken McMullen** • Red Deer Protective Services

**Violet Megunis** • Tsuut'ina Police Commission  
**Diane Piche** • City of Lacombe  
**Kara Westerlund** • Brazeau County Councillor  
**Peter Brown** • City of Airdrie



Since its establishment in 2006, ALERT is essential in Alberta's objective to investigate, disrupt and dismantle organized crime, particularly investigating the scourges of human trafficking and child exploitation in our province.

In that time, ALERT has proven its effectiveness over and over again, arresting more than 660 offenders and laying more than 2,700 charges.

A big reason for ALERT's continued success is its ability to identify and respond to emerging crime trends. Alberta's government wants to ensure this success continues, which is why the province is increasing ALERT's funding by \$50 million over multiple years. This additional funding is helping ALERT expand its geographic reach throughout the province and increase its ability to fight crimes that cross borders, like human trafficking and child exploitation.

ALERT plays a vital role in protecting our communities and improving the lives of everyone in Alberta. On behalf of all Albertans, I would like to thank our partners at ALERT and its member agencies for the important work they do.

**Minister Kaycee Madu**  
Minister of Justice and Solicitor General

Alberta



# INTERNET CHILD EXPLOITATION

ICE investigates offences involving child pornography, any computer-related child sexual abuse, child luring over the Internet, voyeurism involving victims under the age of 18, and child sex trade/tourism.



“This is a level of activity that has been unparalleled in the existence of the ICE unit. ICE is working incredibly hard to put predators behind bars, but we need parents to do their part and be vigilant of their kids’ online activities.”  
- Supt. Dwayne Lakusta, ALERT CEO

145

**PEOPLE ARRESTED** and **500 charges** laid relating to child pornography, child luring, sexual assault, invitation to sexual touching, etc.

2,006

**EXHIBITS SEIZED** included computers, tablets, cell phones, gaming devices, and USBs. The seized devices represent roughly **400 terabytes of data**.

17

**CHILDREN RESCUED** from sexual abuse, exploitation, self-harm, and/or child luring. Instances were ICE’s involvement had a direct intervention in that child’s health and well-being.

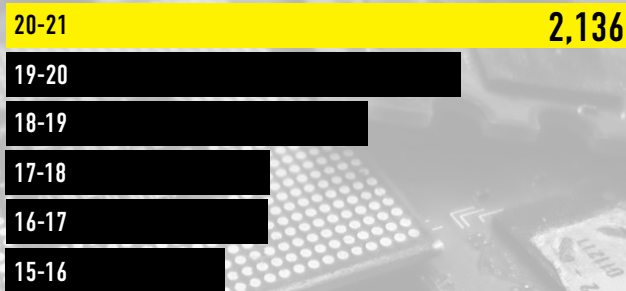
447,743

Expert forensic analysis identified almost half a million **PHOTOS AND VIDEOS** depicting child sexual abuse materials.

## STATS

	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
Arrests	102	100	79	145
Charges	388	471	270	500
Exhibits seized	1,920	1,457	1,322	2,006
Total photos/videos	121,853	423,734	1,082,475	447,743

## INTAKES



# AUTO CRIMES / STOLEN PROPERTY

In 2020-21 ALERT deployed new initiatives to provide coordinated responses to organized auto crimes, and an integrated stolen property crimes unit in southeast Alberta.



“Property crime – much of it driven by drug addiction – endangers the safety and security of Albertans. I am confident ALERT’s innovative partnership with the Medicine Hat Police Service and the RCMP will help bring many of those responsible for drug-related crime in southeastern Alberta to justice.”

- Doug Schweitzer, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, August 2020

**653**

agency assists

**20**

people arrested

**148**

charges laid

**208**

vehicle recoveries



Vehicles, firearms, and power tools are just some of the stolen items recovered by an upstart policing team in southeast Alberta. A joint forces initiative between ALERT, Medicine Hat Police Service, and the RCMP is aimed at tackling regional property crime.

ALERT’s Southeast Alberta Property Crime Unit launched at the beginning of April 2020, with its creation attributable to new funding provided by the Alberta Government. The unit will explore the regional correlation between property crime and street-level drug activity within Medicine Hat and surrounding areas.

**\$770,416**

value of stolen assets recovered by Property Crimes Unit

**\$7,385,280**

value of stolen vehicles recovered by Auto Crimes Unit

# FIREARMS

Organized crime is directly tied to much of Alberta's serious and violent crime. By targeting organized crime groups, ALERT can significantly lower rates of victimization related to drugs, weapons, and straw purchasing offences.



## FIREARMS SEIZED

98

Firearms seized



20-21	98
19-20	94
18-19	68
17-18	71

60

Training section conducted two online courses for **FIREARMS SECTION 2 MECHANICAL TESTING** with 60 candidates trained.

Fifteen firearms were seized as part of a **JOINT FORCES INVESTIGATION** in Red Deer. The guns, including two homemade zip guns, were seized as part of a drug trafficking investigation by Red Deer RCMP. Five suspects were charged in February 2021.

An Airdrie man was arrested in May 2020 for firearms **STRAW PURCHASING**. Brady Fisher had purchased nine firearms, and allegedly diverted them to the criminal market. One of the handguns purchased by Fisher surfaced in an Edmonton Police Service drug investigation, while five firearms remain unaccounted for.

ALERT seized four firearms during the arrest of a Grande Prairie man who was allegedly involved in trafficking **RESTRICTED HANDGUNS**. Allan Salud was arrested in May 2020 after one of the firearms registered to him was seized during a separate drug investigation. Seven handguns remain unaccounted for.

In September 2020, a Picture Butte man was charged with **3D-PRINTING FIREARM PARTS** – the first instance of its kind in Alberta. Dan Forsyth allegedly used 3D printers to manufacture pistol lower frames, assault rifle receivers, bump stocks, and silencers. RCMP's Forensic Science and Identification Services' lab confirmed the 3D-printed parts were functional.

# OPIOIDS & METHAMPHETAMINE

Drug trafficking remains the number one commodity for organized crime. ALERT has seized more than \$600 million worth of harmful drugs, since its inception in 2006.

**30.13 kilograms**

cocaine seized

**6,913 tablets**

opioids and illicit prescription pills

**3.06 kilograms**

fentanyl seized

**38.19 kilograms**

meth seized

**\$6,562,344**

total value of drugs seized



Nearly **14 KILOGRAMS** of methamphetamine was seized from an Edmonton home in January 2021. Valued at more than \$1.35 million, ALERT is working with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to probe the connections to Mexican drug cartels. The seizure equates to more than 45,000 doses when sold at the street level.

Following a four-month investigation in May 2020, ALERT seized 1.7 kilograms of methamphetamine in Medicine Hat. The seizure is believed to be the city's largest and has an estimated **STREET VALUE OF \$127,000**.

Large amounts of fentanyl and meth were seized after ALERT searched a rural residence in Mountain View County. In total, ALERT seized **\$160,000 WORTH OF DRUGS**, alongside four firearms. Six people were arrested and charged with 27 criminal offences. The arrest took place in March 2021.



# CRIMINAL NETWORKS

Organized crime impacts every community in the province. ALERT has eight regional hub teams that are dedicated to disrupting and dismantling organized crime and keeping Alberta communities safe.

## REGIONAL STATISTICS 2020-2021

	Arrests	Charges	Firearms	Drugs	Proceeds
Calgary	22	103	12	\$ 642,498	\$ 258,214
Edmonton	90	450	8	\$ 5,096,377	\$ 1,314,128
Fort McMurray	13	61	3	\$ 166,821	\$ 59,825
Grande Prairie	9	55	5	\$ 130,681	\$ 71,075
Lethbridge	18	84	14	\$ 91,042	\$ 211,512
Medicine Hat	125	461	26	\$ 356,538	\$ 41,040
Red Deer	35	257	30	\$ 78,387	\$ 0
<b>Total 2020-21</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>1,471</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>\$ 6,562,344</b>	<b>\$ 1,955,794</b>
Total 2019-20	292	1,391	94	\$ 14,842,176	\$ 4,654,880
Total 2018-19	343	1,835	68	\$ 11,929,924	\$ 2,476,896
Total 2017-18	336	1,714	71	\$ 9,946,558	\$ 1,710,000

### PROJECT EVOLVE

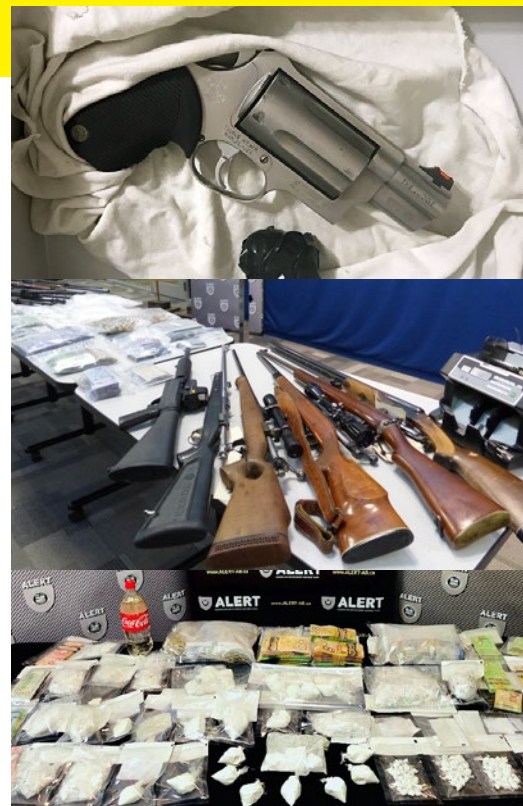
Eleven people were arrested for their alleged role in a **DRUG TRAFFICKING NETWORK**, which operated in the Edmonton area and extended into the Bowden Institution. More than \$300,000 in drugs and cash was seized after homes in St. Albert and Edmonton were searched. Two of the suspects were prison inmates.

### PROJECT INCUMBENT

More than a quarter million dollars in drugs and cash was seized after three homes in Grande Prairie were searched in September 2020. The lengthy investigation targeted a **REGIONAL COCAINE TRAFFICKING NETWORK**, and eight suspects were charged with 33 criminal offences.

### OPERATION DYNASTY

Ten firearms and nearly a quarter million dollars worth of drugs, cash, and vehicles were seized following a series of search warrants in Lethbridge. ALERT raided five homes and **ARRESTED FIVE SUSPECTED DRUG DEALERS**.



# HUMAN TRAFFICKING

ALERT's Human Trafficking and Counter Exploitation Unit, with teams based in Calgary and Edmonton, launched in April 2020.



**"This is truly sickening, and what this victim endured is appalling. This survivor has displayed remarkable courage in providing information to police."**

- S/Sgt. Lance Parker, Operation Eclairé

18



**VICTIM INTERVENTIONS** where an active role was played in providing victims referrals, resources, and/or trauma care.

29



**PEOPLE ARRESTED** and charged relating to human trafficking and sexual exploitation offences.

321



**AGENCY ASSISTS** includes bylaw inspections, body rub compliance reviews, check on welfare, information sharing, survivor interviews, etc.

**ALERT'S HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND COUNTER EXPLOITATION UNIT**, with teams based in Calgary and Edmonton, launched in April 2020. The teams investigate domestic human trafficking involving sexual exploitation occurring in Alberta. Together, they work in collaboration with national, provincial and municipal agencies, and non-governmental organizations, involved in rescuing and supporting survivors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

## OPERATION EVERGREEN

A husband and wife were charged after allegedly procuring women, including youths, for sex in the Edmonton area. Four victims were identified and linked with specialized support services. **Ross and Anita Pickering** were arrested in December 2020.

## OPERATION ECLAIRE

Three suspects were charged after following an extensive human trafficking and sexual assault investigation in February 2021. ALERT worked alongside Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) after a sex trade worker was violently assaulted. **Kevin Dorcelus Cetoute** and **Jonty Jean** were arrested, while **Andrew Elie Abbot** remains at-large.

## OPERATION EXUBERANCE

ALERT charged an Edmonton man with a host of human trafficking offences in March 2021. **Felicien Mufuta** allegedly preyed on vulnerable street population by allegedly controlling them through violence and withholding their identity documents.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

ALERT was established and is funded by the Alberta Government and receives funding via the Provincial Police Service Agreement.



430

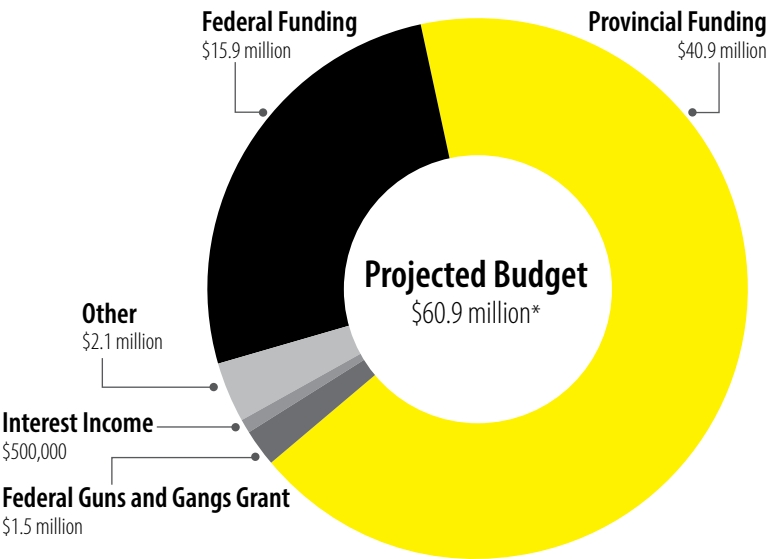
Total Budgeted Postions

54

Budgeted Positions  
Contributed by Partners

376

Budgeted Positions  
Funded by ALERT



\* \$67.2Mil budget has been adjusted for vacancies (\$6.3Mil), totaling \$60.9Mil projected spend





## CONNECT



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