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## Policing offers job security

PRINT EMAIL

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By MICHAEL OWEN  
 Staff Writer

Afraid of unemployment? You shouldn't be if you're taking Police Foundations. The tentative 2009 Niagara Regional Police Service (NRP) budget offers 103 potential job openings. "It has been a long-known fact that a significant number of members reach eligibility to retire with full pensions between the years 2006 and 2008 [approx. 103]," the budget says.

This is one of the reasons given for a 4.06 per cent or \$4.5-million budget increase for personnel from \$106.2 million last year to \$108.7 million. "One hundred and three seems high," said Mark Dirisio, 46, sergeant of recruiting with the NRP. He has been with the NRP for 27 years. "We're preparing to process 20 [positions] for May and anticipate the same for September."

This would put the number of NRP hires in 2009 at 40, which is in line with the average of 30 to 50 new hires over the last few years to maintain a service of 680 officers.

"I feel quite well about it. It's all job security," said Alex Stewart, 21, a second-year Niagara College student in Police Foundations, a two-year program. "You don't go into any job to lose it after a couple of years, and there's always going to be bad guys. It's great knowing you have a well-paying job waiting for you."

"There's job security right off the bat," said Dennis Hesley, 22, a second-year student in the Police Foundations program, he plans to become a military police officer along with Stewart. "With the NRP having 40 positions, that's amazing for our classmates. It's an excellent opportunity to give back to the community."

Stewart estimates an additional 84 jobs are available with the military police, jobs that Police Foundations graduates can take advantage of. That would put the number of jobs available to program graduates at 124 between the NRP and the Canadian military alone.

"I think first year we started with about 200 people and I think by second year about 90 dropped out, so there are still over 100 [second-year students in Police Foundations]," said German Garcia, 21, a second-year student, who plans to work in the Niagara region after graduating. He said knowing about the NRP openings makes him feel "a lot better. Guaranteed."

Police Foundations graduates who become cadets with the NRP start at \$40,918. After three years of service they can become a first class constable with a salary of \$75,329.

"Police numbers stay stable. We're always hiring to maintain the service," said Dirisio.

He expressed sympathy for those going into fields with low employment, but was pleased to have the pick of the litter when it comes to the Police Foundations' graduates.

"We've had excellent success with them."

"It's probably the best program. Obviously they're going to come here first," said Garcia.

"I've travelled all around the world, and I've travelled all around Canada, and I can say there's no place like home, so I could always come back and work for the Niagara Regional Police," said Stewart.

Those interested in working with the NRP can visit <http://www.nrps.com/recruiting/default.asp> or call (905) 688-4111 ext. 5051.



Const. Jim Davies, badge No. 9182, started in law enforcement straight out of college at 19. Photo by Michael Owen

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