

Santa gets his skates on

Santa and some of his new friends went for a skate together at the fifth annual Skate With Santa at the Ridgeview Outdoor Rink Sunday afternoon. The event was sponsored by Tim Hortons and Enhance PG.



Magnetic strips leave credit, debit cards vulnerable

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The U.S. is the juiciest target for hackers hunting credit card information. And experts say incidents like the recent data theft at Target's stores will get worse before they get better. That's in part because U.S. credit and debit cards rely on an easy-to-copy magnetic strip on the back of the card, which stores account information using the same technol-

ogy as cassette tapes. "We are using 20th century cards against 21st century hackers," says Mallory Duncan, general counsel at the National Retail Federation. "The thieves have moved on but the cards have not."

In most countries outside the U.S., people carry cards that use digital chips to hold account information. The chip generates a unique code every time it's used. That makes the cards more difficult for criminals

to replicate. So difficult that they generally don't bother.

"The U.S. is the top victim location for card counterfeit attacks like this," says Jason Oxman, chief executive of the Electronic Transactions Association.

The breach that exposed the credit card and debit card information of as many as 40 million Target customers who swiped their cards between Nov. 27 and Dec. 15 is still under investigation. It's unclear

how the breach occurred and what data, exactly, criminals have. Although security experts say no security system is fail-safe, there are several measures stores, banks and credit card companies can take to protect against these attacks.

Companies haven't further enhanced security because it can be expensive. And while global credit and debit card fraud hit a record \$11.27 billion last year, those costs accounted for just 5.2 cents of every

\$100 in transactions, according to the Nilson Report, which tracks global payments.

Another problem: retailers, banks and credit card companies each want someone else to foot most of the bill. Card companies want stores to pay to better protect their internal systems. Stores want card companies to issue more sophisticated cards. Banks want to preserve the profits they get from older processing systems.



Smoke House Chef Alan O'Reilly chats with environmental health officer Jim Green in the kitchen at the Native Friendship Centre.

'We've come to a solution'

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Around that time, the health authority decided a culture change was in order. Existing staff were trained on ways to work together and new staff were hired based on their ability to find creative solutions.

The new approach means rather than enforcing the regulations, which say vendors at farmer's markets can only sell frozen meat and all others are in violation, health officials will work with groups who want to sell fresh meat to find a way to do so in a safe manner.

"We've come to a solution for how we can do it, by putting some additional checks and balances in place," Beck said. "We feel the food is still safe to sell to the public."

The collaborative arrangement has also allowed farm-to-school programs to flourish and enhanced co-operation with groups interested in food security. Beck said Northern Health officials now encourage groups

with innovative ways to serve and distribute local food to contact them first so they can work together to ensure it's safe.

"Before food security would get in there and have some really great ideas about having local food systems, but they never talked to the food safety side of it and food safety would come in and say, 'you can't do that,' or 'you have to put that in place,'" Beck said. "So we started working together, got them to understand why food safety was important and they got us to understand why food security was important and now we deal with these things together."

Beck said three years after the culture shift began, the nutritionists received a much warmer reaction when they returned to the farmers' markets.

"They were told about how supportive the environmental health officers were, how they helped them solve the problems," she said. "It was just a real turnaround."

YEAR IN REVIEW

Cold cases, fresh wrongs all part of 2013

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Crime in Prince George continued to make headlines both locally and abroad during 2013 — but city officials had at least one reason to celebrate as Maclean's magazine backed away from its annual ranking of cities according to crime rate.

After naming Prince George "Canada's most dangerous city" for three straight years, the weekly newsmagazine conducted no survey this year. It meant the dubious title was not passed on to another community but that was fine by Mayor Shari Green.

"Nobody deserves the headline they create with the way that they spin the numbers," Green said earlier this month when the survey was missing from its year-end newsmaker issue, in contrast to the year before.

That's not to say Prince George was completely out of the spotlight as both CBC's Fifth Estate and NBC's Dateline aired their takes on the case of Denis Florian Ratte, who was found guilty in November 2010 of murdering his wife, Wendy Ann Twiss Ratte, in 1997.

Allegations of a horrific sexual assault also drew out-of-town headlines when barely a week into the new year and RCMP had arrested two adults and four youth on allegations they sexually assaulted a youth who was found unconscious in a snowbank behind an apartment building near Connaught Hill Park.

The adults were identified as Mercedes Rae Jewett, 20, and Hayden Lee Alwood, 18, while the identities of the four youths were protected from publication. The case remains before the court.

Also early in 2013, the B.C. Justice Ministry took the unusual step of issuing a public warning for Kayla Bourque just as she began three years of probation for

killing and torturing animals.

An orphan from Romania who grew up in the Prince George area, Bourque had been identified as a high-risk offender who showed signs of violent tendencies dating back to her childhood.

A student in her criminology class at Simon Fraser University notified authorities when Bourque told the classmate about planning to kill a homeless person. A so-called kill kit was discovered in her room at the university that included duct tape and other restraints.

The Highway of Tears also remained in the news as, in February, Human Rights Watch, a New York-based advocacy group, alleged abuses by police were committed against aboriginal women in northern B.C.

During a press conference in Prince George, it called for a civilian watchdog to investigate misconduct by law enforcement and maintained existing police complaint mechanisms, including the Commission for Public Complaints against the RCMP, fall short of what's needed.

Three months later, the Commission for Public Complaints launched its own formal investigation in response to the complaints outlined in the HRW report. That investigation remains ongoing.

The Prince George courthouse hosted its share of high-profile cases.

In February, Lloyd William Cook was sentenced to five years in prison for two convictions related to the January 2000 death of his stepson, Adam Scott Williams-Dudoward — unlawful confinement and indignity to a dead body.

What had already been a bizarre case took a new turn with Cook failed to show for the judge's decision. He was subsequently deemed an absconder and found guilty in absentia. He was sentenced later the same month after police picked him up in Osoyoos.

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Prince George Transit

New Fares

Effective January 1, 2014



	Adult	Student/Senior*
Cash	\$ 2.50	\$ 2.00
Tickets (10)	22.50	18.00
DayPASS	6.25	5.25
Monthly Pass	57.50	48.00
Semester Pass	125.00	125.00
ProPass	49.35	
handyDART	2.25	2.25

*Reduced fare with valid I.D. for persons 65 or over, and students in full-time attendance.



CITY OF PRINCE GEORGE



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At RE/MAX Centre City Realty, our realtors raised \$7,400 at their Christmas Party Live Auction

Ron Brent, Harwin and Quinson elementary schools received the funds to go towards their lunch hour and extra activities programs.

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