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Slow Down Lamorinda Police say the campaign is about prevention, not citations

By Sophie Braccini

Although you may have seen cars sporting distinctive Slow Down Lamorinda bumper stickers making their way along our long and winding roads over the last few years, the last Slow Down Lamorinda campaign was in 2007. Early this month, Slow Down Lamorinda returned to streets near you.

It's more than bumper stickers, informative banners and pledges by residents to slow down. Lamorinda's police chiefs have structured a crack-down on speeders and will rotate between the three communities all summer. Moraga Mayor Mike Metcalf, who was also mayor five years ago, proposed the resurrection of the Slow Down campaign at the last tri-city meeting. "I was not here when the first campaign was launched, but when Chief Priebe (of Moraga) talked to me about it, I immediately agreed," said Lafayette Police Chief Eric Christensen. The three police chiefs designed the campaign's format- one day per week, the patrol officers of the three communities meet in one of the cities or town and select the most problematic streets. For eight hours, they enforce traffic laws together in the designated areas.

The Slow Down Lamorinda campaign began on June 1. "We started the program in Moraga," said Lieutenant Jeff Price of the Moraga Police Department. "We went over our traffic surveys and chose Larch, Corliss and Moraga Road as the areas of most concern." Over an eight-hour period 22 citations were written, which is way above Moraga's 2011 average of three or four citations per day.

"The purpose is prevention and education," said Price. "Not everybody that's stopped gets a citation."

The following week officers targeted Deer Hill Road and Moraga Road in Lafayette and issued a total of 37 citations. Christensen sees this operation as a good example of the cooperation between the three departments. "We have a very good working relationship," he said. "We make things work the best we can, and we share resources whenever necessary and/or beneficial to law enforcement."

The first Slow Down Lamorinda campaign was launched 5 years ago in the aftermath of 3 fatal accidents that were due to speeding.

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