



ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Lighting the Way ~ Rejoicing in Our Journey

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Catholic Education Centre
420 Creek Street
Wallaceburg, ON N8A 4C4
Telephone: 519-627-6762
Facsimile: 519-627-8230
Website: www.st-clair.net

Director of Education
Dan Parr
519-627-6762, ext. 10241
E-mail: media@st-clair.net

Chair of the Board
John Van Heck
519-627-2908

*For further information regarding
this release, please contact:*

**Our Lady of Fatima
Catholic School**
Lisa Demers, Principal
519-351-4040
lisa.demers@st-clair.net

Dan Rolo, Teacher
519-351-4040
dan.rola@st-clair.net

**Supervisor –
Communications and
Community Relations**
Todd Lozon
519-627-6762 Ext. 10243
E-mail:
todd.lozon@st-clair.net

**Ontario Ministry of
Transportation**
Christina Martin
519-873-4314
E-mail:
Christina.martin@ontario.ca

OUR LADY OF FATIMA ROBOTICS TEAM PARTNERS WITH MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION TO DEVELOP DEER CROSSING WARNING SYSTEM

Members of the Cyber Knights, the robotics team at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School in Chatham, have helped to develop a system to alert drivers when deer are on the move.

“The students are really excited that officials with the Ministry of Transportation liked their idea and that it is being piloted in the area,” says Dan Rolo, a teacher and robotics team coach at Our Lady of Fatima.

The students participated in a FIRST Robotics Canada competition in Sarnia last December. One component of the competition was to identify a real-world problem, develop a solution and then present the idea to professionals who work in the field. The theme was “Animal Allies” and the team decided to look into how to prevent vehicle collisions with deer.

The device they developed consists of a motion-activated exterior light mounted on a post facing away from the highway. Their thinking was that when deer approach the roadway, the light would be triggered, frightening the animal away from the road.

Mr. Rolo reached out to staff from the West Region Ministry of Transportation, and following a meeting with representatives from the Traffic Section and Operations Office, further refinements were made. It was determined the light should be fitted with some type of backing to prevent it from being seen from the highway, so that drivers are not distracted. In addition, the motion sensor will also activate a flashing beacon mounted above a deer alert sign, so that motorists know animals are on the move nearby and to drive with caution.

“It’s so great to see an interest in public safety from such a group of bright young minds like the Cyber Knights. The ministry is very pleased to pilot their invention, and I look forward to the results” says Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation.

The deer alert warning system was installed in April on 40 Highway near Bickford Line in Lambton County, and the results of the pilot will be reviewed in December.

The Cyber Knights will meet again with representatives of the West Region Ministry of Transportation 1:30 p.m. on Monday, May 1, 2017 at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School, 545 Baldoon Road, Chatham.

Members of the media are welcome.