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LAW ENFORCEMENT REVIEW AGENCY RELEASES 2003 ANNUAL REPORT

Time Frame to Complete Investigations Improved

The number of new files opened increased again while the average time it took to complete an investigation was shortened according to the 2003 annual report of the Law Enforcement Review Agency (LERA).

LERA investigates public complaints about the 14 municipal police forces in Manitoba. It does not investigate criminal matters, but focuses on complaints about the way officers conduct themselves on duty.

Last year, 250 formal complaints were filed with LERA, the highest number of complaints filed with the agency since its inception. The number of new investigations, combined with ongoing files, meant the agency worked on a total of 447 investigations in 2003. The time it took to complete investigations decreased to an average of nine months.

Some cases were resolved through an informal process. Some matters where an informal resolution was not possible and enough evidence existed were referred to a provincial judge. A total of five complaints were referred for that kind of hearing last year.

Complaints included allegations of abuse of authority, arrest without reasonable or probable grounds, using unnecessary or excessive force, using oppressive or abusive conduct or language, and being discourteous or uncivil.

This year's annual report, a number of previous years' reports, links to other civilian law enforcement agencies and more information about LERA are posted on the agency's newly expanded website at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/lera>.

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