

## Patrollers sporting sharp new duds to mark 5 years

By **DAVID SCHMEICHEL**, SUN MEDIA

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**The Exchange District BIZ is celebrating its fifth anniversary and have recognized how well the community has embraced the Exchange Patrol.**

They've been pounding the pavement for the past five years, always ready with a helping hand, a word of advice or just a friendly smile.

But now, members of the Exchange District BIZ's Exchange Patrol Program -- those tireless foot soldiers who also serve as the eyes and ears for local law enforcement -- are going to be easier than ever to spot in a crowd.

To help mark their milestone, the patrols have traded their old uniforms for even sharper-looking yellow and black duds.

But while the outfits have changed, the job is still the same: Serve as ambassadors for the district, and a reassuring presence to the public.

"Public relations is definitely a major role in this -- you have to be able to take anything that anyone throws at you," said Josiah Cook, one of two full-time patrols (along with partner Lisa Knieval) who heads up a team of 12 to 14 volunteers.

"It really forces you to learn good PR skills, and how to deal with anything and everything in a respectful manner."

But in addition to their daily duties -- giving directions, showing people how to plug parking metres, offering safe walks to cars or bus stops -- the patrols also hope

their "front line" experience eventually helps them land a job in law enforcement.

"You really find out what kind of person you are, and what type of character you have," said BIZ director of operations Brian Timmerman, himself a 25-year veteran of the Winnipeg Police Service, after noting the patrol program is always seeking new recruits.

"They get a lot of experience, even without any real powers of arrest, so they really have to learn how to talk."

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