

U.S. BORDER PATROL TO SHUT DOWN PASSAGE ON FOUR FALLS/RUSSELL ROAD

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Insinuates Canada is Crawling With "Terrorists" Scrambling to Get into U.S.

By: David Deschesne

FORT FAIRFIELD, Maine -Scepticism and mistrust of government permeated the crowd gathered at the U.S. Border Patrol's town hall meeting held at the V.F.W. on Nov. 24, 2008. Chief Patrol Agent. Joseph Mellia once again presented his "terrorist under every rock" thesis as he insinuated Canada is busting at the seams with terrorists stumbling all over each other to get into the United States. However, an increasingly impatient crowd of nearly 75 people wasn't buying what Mellia was selling.

Fear-mongering aside, the U.S. Border Patrol is in fact charged with securing the U.S. Borders and ensuring nobody enters without undergoing the proper inspection at an authorized Port of Entry. Unfortunately, the Feds have felt the need to default to a terrorist fear-mongering dialectic in order to convince a sceptical populace to allow them to do their job. Mellia announced that the Four Falls crossing will no longer be unmonitored and an agent will be placed there 24/7 to prevent passage from Canada into the U.S. "Four Falls is a high threat area," explained Mellia. "It is a paved, unguarded road with access to Route 1A. It is my goal to no longer allow vehicles to go down that road unimpeded, unchecked, without knowing who they are, or what they have. This is a big, gaping hole with nothing stopping anyone from coming down that road."

Mellia says no barriers will be constructed, yet. Instead, a Border Patrol agent will be stationed in a vehicle to monitor traffic on that portion of Russell Road, nearest the border crossing and stop and query anyone coming in from the Canadian side. Nick Pedersen, the elderly gentleman whose driveway meanders in and out of Canada and the U.S. has his meals delivered by family members. One of the Peterson family was at the meeting and voiced her concerns about being able to bring hot meals across the border at the Port of Entry, since she will no longer be allowed unreported access. In the past, she had been prohibited from bringing meals to Mr. Pedersen. "We will accommodate the meals for Mr. Pedersen," said Chris Sullivan, Port Director for Aroostook County, "and we will put that in writing." Also, ambulances and emergency vehicles will also be able to proceed unimpeded. However, the Town of Fort Fairfield's Public Works may have a more difficult time traversing the border with their plough trucks in the winter, since they have a long standing agreement with town of Perth to plough portions of Russell Road that cross into Canada for several Fort Fairfield inhabitants who live on the U.S. side of the road.

"For the past 80 to 90 years the citizens of this community have had unfettered access to the Russell Road to travel to their homes and their property despite the fact that part of that road actually crosses into Canada," said Fort Fairfield Town Manager, Dan Foster. "Now, due to external circumstances, it is determined by folks from "away" that can no longer occur. That decision was made without any interaction with the local citizens

regarding how this might adversely impact them. This is not about whether there is a security risk; it is about the process used to determine how that risk is minimized. My personal feeling is that the process for resolving the problem was based on economies' and that the assumption made was that local citizens would soon get used to any inconveniences that may occur."

Mellia responded by reminding the crowd that the Border Patrol consists of sworn officers who have agreed to uphold the laws. He also advised that a working group consisting of Border Patrol, Customs and Border Protection, town and private individuals will be constructed in the near future to figure out along-term solution to the unchecked border entry on Russell Road. Those who are trying to cross from Canada at the Four Falls area will be stopped by a Border Patrol agent, processed, entered into a database have their vehicle processed in a database, advised they are not permitted to enter the U.S. at that point and directed back to Canada to cross at the Port of Entry less than five miles away. On a second offence, the vehicle will be taken away and returned after a fine is paid. A third offence will have the vehicle seized and not returned and a fourth offence will have the vehicle seized, not returned and prosecution of the person through the U.S. District Attorney's office. Mellia also indicated that \$5.5 million was allocated for Operation Stonegarden in Maine; a program that pays local police to assist in border-watching duties. "We're not asking local law enforcement to do our work for us, we just want to have more out there to help us achieve our goals," said Mellia. Mellia responded by reminding the crowd that the Border Patrol consists of sworn officers who have agreed to uphold the laws. He also advised that a working group consisting of Border Patrol, Customs and Border Protection, town and private individuals will be constructed in the near future to figure out along-term solution to the unchecked border entry on Russell Road. Those who are trying to cross from Canada at the Four Falls area will be stopped by a Border Patrol agent, processed, entered into a database have their vehicle processed in a database, advised they are not permitted to enter the U.S. at that point and directed back to Canada to cross at the Port of Entry less than five miles away.

In October, 2006, Fort Fairfield Police Department received Operation Stonegarden money. Rather than increased border security," FFPD used the money to put more officers on duty to catch speeding motorists. In that time period, the number of speeders reported in the Fort Fairfield Journal Police Log jumped to nearly four times the amount normally logged during periods where the Police Department doesn't have access to Federal "border protection" money. For "operational security" reasons, Mellia would not indicate when the restrictions on Russell Road would commence. The Border Patrol is currently undergoing a massive increase of agents in Fort Fairfield and is constructing a new, larger base of operations on Center Limestone Road.