

## **Firearm smuggling on rise**

By BILL KAUFMANN, SUN MEDIA

Edmonton sun

Last Updated: 15th June 2009, 2:12am

CALGARY -- The number of prohibited firearms being intercepted at the Alberta-Montana border is creeping up and on pace to surpass last year's tally, say the agents seizing them.

Last year, 21 prohibited guns were discovered as they crossed from the United States into Canada, compared to 20 in 2007.

Already this year, 13 have been uncovered, said Lisa White, spokesman for Canada Border Services Agency.

"I would say the numbers we are getting are significant numbers, particularly the prohibited numbers," said White.

The number of restricted firearms -- mainly handguns or semi-automatic rifles -- seized at Alberta's borders in 2008 numbered 24, the same as the year before.

Last month, a Montana-based agent with Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms told Sun Media that handguns are increasingly being smuggled into Alberta.

White said Canadian border agents are serious about cracking down on the activity.

"Our officers are trained to detect all kinds of firearms, and part of that training is keeping up with concealment methods, which are constantly changing," she said.

In January, agents discovered 10 semi-automatic handguns, 11 high-capacity magazines and 300 rounds of ammunition hidden in the inside panels of a minivan.

Adrian Le-Mon Barnes, 30, of the Edmonton area, is to appear in Lethbridge provincial court Friday to face dozens of firearms charges.