

## The Chronicle Journal

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### **Crime generally going down; Some lawyers hurting city's cohesive efforts: Mayor**

Posted: Tuesday, September 27, 2016 11:09 am

By Jeff Labine THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL |

Thunder Bay's mayor says he's sick of high priced Toronto lawyers causing wedges between the city and its indigenous people.

The Crime Prevention Council provided council on Monday with an update on the group's efforts and a snapshot on the city's crime trends. The report showed that the overall crime rate in Thunder Bay has been going down since 1998. Between 2014 and 2015, the overall youth crime rate has gone down by 28 per cent, and by 30 per cent for the youth violent crime rate. Despite this trend, some members of council voice frustration with the negative messages that are presented in the media.

Mayor Keith Hobbs said since 2014, Thunder Bay has had 24 homicides, with charges being laid in 23 of those cases, which he believes is better than Scotland Yard's record.

"We're still being hammered by the media and high-priced lawyers from Toronto telling us we're not doing enough," he said. "I'm sick and tired of high-priced lawyers coming in and trying to drive a wedge between us and indigenous people. It's got to stop. We are suppose to be working together. Instead of finger pointing, let me challenge those lawyers to come to the table and start working for us. With all the work that we have done, how do we impress upon not only the media but Canada that we're one of the leaders in crime prevention, albeit with high numbers."

Thunder Bay Police Service Deputy Chief Andy Hay explained that Thunder Bay has unique crime problems but they are working with the community and the Crime Prevention Council as well as the indigenous community. He said they do look at the issues that impact indigenous people but not all of those issues can be handled by police.

"That doesn't mean we give up," he said. "We meet regularly with the deputy grand chief on a community task force for violence within the community. There will be people, there will be those who want to drive wedges between the police, our community and the indigenous community."

He added that the best thing they can do is to always show they are making efforts to build relationships.

Crime Prevention Council co-ordinator Lee-Ann Chevrette explained that a big issue the city faces is a lack of funding to help with poverty and homelessness. She said nothing will change unless they receive more support.

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