

Regional police gather in Thunder Bay for annual conference

Event brings representatives of region's police forces and police services boards to Thunder Bay

CBC News Posted: Oct 07, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Oct 07, 2016 7:00 AM ET



Don Smith is vice-president of the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards.

Post traumatic stress disorder, the LGBT community and policing, and technological advances in the OPP are among the topics being discussed this week at the annual Zone 1 meeting and conference.

The event drew representatives of northwestern Ontario's police forces and police service boards to Thunder Bay for two days, with the conference itself taking place at the Balmoral Street police station.

"It's a joint venture between the ... Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and the Ontario Association of Police Service Boards (OAPSB)," said Don Smith, OAPSB vice-president.

"It's kind of a unique situation in this area," he said. "It's called Zone 1, which is all northwestern Ontario, and we have a unique relationship where we meet as a group

with the chiefs and the police service boards, trying to get as much education as we can."

Doug Palson, chief of the Dryden Police Service, said the conference has been informative.

"It's a good way to work closely with the boards, the various police boards," he said. "[It's] important to have a good relationship with them."

Thunder Bay Police Chief J.P. Levesque also gave a presentation on the Future of Policing Committee (FPAC), which Smith said is made up of policing stakeholders who are working with the government on updating the Police Services Act (PSA).

The review of the PSA is supposed to begin next year, Smith said.

"There are many areas that need to be addressed in the Police Services Act," he said. "I think it was 1997 [when] it was last reopened, so it's a huge undertaking."

"Quite honestly, times have changed."