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Police want to get out of court security and prisoner transporting

By **CARRIE BRUNET**
The Champion

Police chiefs across Ontario are looking to the Province to create legislation that will maximize the number of police officers in front-line duties.

A motion put forward by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP),

which met late last month in Oakville, requests legislation that would dismiss police officers from prisoner transportation and court security duties.

"We are not advocating the elimination of police jobs by this approach but indeed the better use of police officers," OACP president South Simcoe Police Chief Bruce Davis said. "We strongly believe our prisoners and courts must be kept secure and we support all efforts toward these objectives. We do not believe police officers should be required to do this. They are not core functions as defined in the Police Services Act."

Core functions defined under the act include crime prevention, law enforcement, victim assistance, public order maintenance and emergency response.

Instead, the motion suggests that corrections officers or private security officers be assigned these duties.

While he wouldn't speculate on the number of officers currently performing these duties, Chief Davis said officers often spend long hours in corrections roles. This becomes especially apparent in Northern Ontario, where distances between courts and jails can be long.

Halton Regional Police Chief Ean Algar said it won't be an especially big issue in this region. Currently, special constables, who aren't sworn police officers, handle the bulk of prisoner transportation, he

• see **CORRECTIONS** on page 9



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