

Robbery victim stabbed

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

A 24-year-old man was treated for stab wounds early Wednesday after being assaulted in an apartment hallway on Thunder Bay's south side. City police said the man was "approached" in a S. May Street building by a "group of six to eight males," who then robbed him.

The victim was stabbed in the process. Around 1 a.m., police said, the victim went to Shelter House where he was treated by paramedics.

He was later transported to Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. Police said later Wednesday they weren't aware of his condition.

No other information was provided. Police continue to investigate.

Blown tire leads to fire

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

A blown-out truck tire that caught fire on the outskirts of Thunder Bay late Tuesday is to blame for igniting a large blaze that destroyed a trailer full of courier mail, provincial police said. Police said it took Kaministiquia volunteer firefighters three hours to put out the Highway 102 blaze just west of Silver Falls Roads.

Police and firefighters went to the scene just before midnight. No injuries were reported. The burning trailer was detached from the tractor portion of the transport truck before the trailer became engulfed.

A spokesman for UPS Canada confirmed Wednesday that "all the packages were lost in the fire."

"Our goal is to ensure all affected customers are notified and all claims of customer shipments are processed in a timely manner," the spokesman said.

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THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL/BRENT LINTON

The Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra rehearse Wednesday for Carmina Brown, a Masterworks Series concert to be performed tonight at 8 p.m. at the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium. The symphony announced their 2015-16 season Wednesday.

Symphony looks to next season

BY BRENT LINTON
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Lovers of high-calibre music have another season packed with variety coming next year from the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra.

"There is a lot to look forward to over the course of the year," said Shannon Whidden, executive director of the TBSO.

"We have several specials which are going to be really exciting," he said, citing Rajaton as an example. "This is a Finnish group which is becoming really well known across the world for their outstanding renditions of Queen music, ABBA music. They also do a lot of their own repertoire as well. When they come to us they will be bringing their ABBA program."

Whidden said the Masterworks Series will showcase exciting visiting artists, such as rising star Avon Yu, international violinist Yi-Jia Susanne Hou, and returning vocal artist Sarah Slean.

"Sarah was on our Pops Series this year but we are bringing her back. She is an artist of impeccable taste and a wonderful talent."

Next year's Pops Series will include Juno winner Meaghan Smith.

"She is just starting to do orchestral shows and we had the opportunity to bring a new artist to Thunder Bay," said Whidden.

Other season highlights include the Best of Broadway with Brian Jackson, Women of Rock with Jeans 'n Classics. The lineup of Family Series concerts includes Peter and the Wolf and a musical interpretation of Roch Carrier's well-known The Hockey Sweater.

"If you have kid who has played on hockey teams they are going to know the Hockey Sweater," said Whidden. "It is set to a unique score by Abigail Richardson and will be a really exciting moment for kids who really enjoy hockey."

For more information on the upcoming season visit the symphony's website www.tbsoc.ca.

Report tracks Northerners

BY BRYAN MEADOWS
NORTHWEST BUREAU

Thunder Bay was able to mitigate some out-migration from 2001 to 2013 through investments largely in the health-care sector, a new report released by the Northern Policy Institute says.

The new report, released Wednesday, shows the close relationship between Northern Ontario's overall declining population and the struggling primary industry sector.

The Diversify, Innovate, Invest... and Grow report, was researched and written by Julien Bonin and examines the trends in population throughout the 11 census districts in Northern Ontario over the 12-year period.

According to the report, the districts of Sudbury, Rainy River, Cochrane, Timiskaming, Algoma, and Thunder Bay saw declines in population, while Kenora, Greater Sudbury, Manitoulin, Parry Sound, and Nipissing saw some growth.

"Cumulative population change from 2001 to 2013 demonstrates that six of the 11 Northern Ontario districts experience a decline in population," the report said. "Much of the decline can be connected to a reliance on the primary sectors."

The report highlights that growth occurred in more diversified economies where there were early efforts at innovation in primary industries, investment in major infrastructure, and higher birth rates among Aboriginal populations.

Northern Policy Institute president Charles Cirtwill told The Chronicle-Journal that while Thunder Bay saw its population fall from around 127,000 to 125,000 (a 1.2-per cent decline) between 2001 to 2013, district numbers dropped even further — 4.7 per cent over the same period.

"That suggests urbanization, immigration of Aboriginal and First Nations population, and the changing economy of the city (primarily with the opening of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, investments in research and the Cyclotron) helped us mitigate the pain felt by smaller, generally single-industry communities," Cirtwill said.

"Looking at the trends across the north, it seems that population growth can be found in areas where Aboriginal populations are growing, where the economy is seeing some level of diversification (trade, health, telecommunications) and where significant investment in infrastructure (roads in particular) is

Northern Policy Institute notes 'urbanization' of declining population

occurring," he said.

"All of these apply in the Thunder Bay district. Unfortunately, where we see the greatest decline in the last decade we see correlation to downturns in the primary resource sectors (mining and forestry) which also applies to the Thunder Bay district," he said.

"As a result, we net out into a decline overall, despite some periods of growth connected to things like the opening of Northern Ontario School of Medicine and the expansion in health research here," Cirtwill added.

Historically, Northern Ontario's population peaked in 1993 at approximately 850,200 people, and has been gradually declining ever since, the Northern Policy Institute report says.

Overall, Northern Ontario's population has decreased by over two per cent, with the districts of Sudbury, Rainy River, Cochrane, Timiskaming, Algoma, and Thunder declining the most. There are however, some pockets of growth, particularly in the Kenora district, as well as in the Southern most districts of Greater Sudbury, Manitoulin, Parry Sound, and Nipissing.

The report said that the changing economic mix in the Nipissing district, the growth of the service and retail sectors in Greater Sudbury, and high birthrates in Kenora and Manitoulin are all noted as contributors to population growth. The report also highlights recent innovations in forest product production and resulting new opportunities in the region.

The report concludes that between 2001-2013 "Northern Ontario's population fluctuations can largely be associated with the boom and busts of the primary industry sectors such as forestry and mining. With reliance on these sectors significantly reduced future trends are harder to predict. It is clear that economic opportunity and population remain closely connected."

To read the full report and view an accompanying video podcast, visit www.northernpolicy.ca.