

Prince George's County officials expressed outrage and frustration Friday about a story line on the ABC television show "Commander in Chief," depicting Hyattsville as a backward, crime ridden community.

Tuesday's episode of the fictional show about the nation's first female president focused on protests over a series of unsolved homicides in Hyattsville. President Mackenzie Allen, portrayed by Geena Davis, visits the community to try to calm the unrest.

According to a partial transcript show provided by the office of Rep. Steny Hoyer, D.Md., one character states that there have been 11 homicides in Hyattsville in six months.

"We haven't had 11 homicides in Hyattsville in the past 10 years," said Jim Keary, chief spokesman for County Executive Jack. B. Johnson.

According to the transcript, Allen attends a meeting with residents in which one resident tells her that the county needs "More better cops."

Before the meeting, she is seen getting out of a car in front of a restaurant advertising chitterlings and pork chops, said Johnson, speaking to reporters at Hyattsville's city hall. Johnson believes the scene offered the world a false, outdated and inappropriate view of the city and the county.

"We are harkening back to an old inability of this country to celebrate the leadership and the diversity of African-American communities and diverse communities all over this country," he said.

Keary also took exception to the comment that the county needs more police officers, noting that Johnson's office instituted a hiring push and reformed the recruitment and training of officers as part of a settlement of federal civil rights lawsuit by the Department of Justice.

Publicists for "Commander in Chief" and others at ABC did immediately return calls from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Hoyer, who represents part of Prince George's and has lived there for more than 50 years, said the county should not be depicted as crime ridden. Hoyer said people who are not informed often have trouble separating fiction from fact.

"Hyattsville is growing, prospering, expanding and creating wonderful and good life for its citizens," said Hoyer.

Area leaders said they would contact ABC to convey their concerns. They also invited Davis to visit the county to set the record straight.

"Prince George's County is one of the strongest counties in the nation," said Rep. Benjamin L. Cardin, D-Md., who is also seeking a U.S. Senate seat. "The name of the city was a real city. The county is a real county and the way that they broadcast was not responsible."

In at least one case, though, the show depicted Prince George's as less violent than it has been in real life. According to the transcript, Allen mentions that Prince George's County reported 135 murders in a year. In real life, the county had 178 homicides in 2005, according to county police statistics.

But Keary, said the show does not reflect a recent drop in homicides and other crime in the county.

"The homicide rate is down 40 percent from the rate of last year," said Keary. "At that clip, you're going to finish the year much lower than 100."