

Investigation continues in shooting death

*Posted: Monday, Apr 20th, 2009*

BY: ROGER LARSEN

Law enforcement authorities are investigating whether the Thursday shooting of a 23-year-old Huron man at a southwest mobile home park was justified.

Ricardo (RJ) Hein died from wounds suffered after he was shot by a shotgun late in the afternoon at Prairie Villa Manufactured Home Community No. 151. Police said a woman placed a 911 call to the police dispatch center at 5:31 p.m. and said someone had tried to break into their home and that the intruder may have been shot.

Hein's body was found in the driveway, said police chief Doug Schmitt. He declined to release where the shooting occurred.

No arrests have been made and the name of the individual who fired the shotgun is not being released. Schmitt said the person is a 35- to 40-year-old male and that he and the victim knew each other.

Authorities are talking with witnesses to determine whether Hein was armed.

"Whether RJ had a weapon or not is still under investigation," said Beadle County State's Attorney Mike Moore.

"We, right now today, are processing the crime scene, looking for evidence that proves the statements made by witnesses," Schmitt said.

Three others were in the home at the time, including a woman and two young children, he said.

Moore said any charges will be considered after all of the information has been gathered, the scene has been processed and the interviews have been completed.

"Then we'll decide if charges are warranted," he said.

Part of the investigation will also involve determining whether the shooting was a justifiable homicide, Moore said.

South Dakota law considers it to be self defense if a person is protecting oneself or others because of fears of great bodily harm or death.

Schmitt and Moore said authorities have been speaking to witnesses about a series of incidents earlier in the day between the two individuals that may have led to the confrontation at the mobile home. They are also interviewing witnesses to the shooting.

"There were several people that were in the trailer house or around the trailer house when it happened," Moore said.

"This was not a random act between two people," Schmitt said. "Both people knew each other."

It is the third violent death in Huron in less than two months.

But while it is the third homicide this year, Schmitt said in all three cases the parties knew each other.

"These are isolated incidents and the public should not be in fear for their safety," he stressed.

The case remains under investigation by the Huron Police Department, state Division of Criminal Investigation, Beadle County Sheriff's Office and the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

"If there's an arrest made, of course, we're going to put out that information to the media as quickly as possible," Schmitt said.

Schmitt said more information will be released to the public when it becomes available.

Meanwhile, Brookings County State's Attorney Clyde Calhoon said Friday he will not file criminal charges against the resident who fatally shot a man who forcibly entered his Brookings home at 2 a.m. April 9.

Calhoon said his review of the case indicates the home's occupant, a 28-year-old man whose name was not released, was justified in the shooting because he feared for his life. Bradley Odens, 23, died of a single gunshot wound to the chest. He may have been confused and thought he was entering his house and continued to force his way in after being warned by the resident, police said. Odens' house was two doors away.