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Boy dies in aunt's care; *Pit bulls suspected*

By Jeff M. Hardison © Aug. 8, 2014

FANNING SPRINGS -- Levy County Sheriff's Office investigators are investigating the death of a 6-year-old boy in the Levy County area of Fanning Springs that happened on Thursday morning (Aug. 7).

Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum said on Friday morning (Aug. 8) that contact has not been possible as of that point with the boy's mother.

The boy's father has custody of the boy. The child's aunt had driven the father to work Thursday morning. This boy had stayed at the home with the aunt and his grandfather for the past three or four days before, McCallum said. The aunt shares the home with the boy's grandfather, McCallum said.

The boy had gone out to their yard to play at about 8:10 to 8:15 a.m. on Thursday. Two pit bulldogs which live at the house had been let out in the yard, McCallum said.

The aunt was packing things so that she and the boy could visit her mother (the boy's grandmother). Investigations as of Friday showed the boy had been out of the aunt's sight for 10 to 15 minutes, McCallum said.

"At 8:25, we (the Levy County Sheriff's Office) got the call," McCallum said. "At 8:37, EMS personnel pronounced (that the victim had died)."

The grandfather had been inside watching television, McCallum said, and when the aunt looked outside and she saw the boy was lying down, she went to him. He was unresponsive. She called 9-1-1 and an ambulance arrived.

"It is a terrible tragedy," McCallum said.

The two pit bulls suspected of having attacked and killed the boy were taken into custody by Levy County Animal Services, McCallum said. There were four other dogs in pens on the property that were collected as well.

McCallum said it is too early to say whether the two dogs suspected of killing the boy will be euthanized. An autopsy will show the cause of death, McCallum said. He said the investigation is not complete yet, and so he cannot say if any criminal charges will result from this death.

McCallum said the aunt has other children at the property and the family has never had any problems with dogs that were reported to the LCSO or Levy County Animal Services.

When deputies and Levy County Department of Public Safety personnel arrived, they discovered injuries on the body that are consistent with the boy having been attacked by one dog or more than one dog, LCSO Undersheriff Brett Beauchamp said on Thursday.

Deputies immediately set up an incident scene perimeter and began their investigation. They were assisted by Levy County Animal Services, the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office, and the Eighth Judicial Circuit Medical Examiner's Office, Beauchamp said.

Victim services were provided by Another Way Inc., Beauchamp said.

Levy County Animal Services personnel removed multiple dogs from the property for quarantine purposes, Beauchamp said.

-- UPDATED --

FRI. AUG. 8 10:57 a.m.

Levy, Dixie, Gilchrist counties

Teen's death investigated

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