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'Suspicious' Death

Sheriff's Office Investigating Death Of Sioux City Woman

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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According to Clay County Sheriff Andy Howe, the Clay County Sheriff's Office and the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) are investigating the suspicious death of an adult female who was found late Monday afternoon.

The body of Alicia Hummel, 29 of Sioux City, Iowa, was found in the water near the boat dock at Myron Grove, also known as the Highline Landing, around 2 p.m. on Monday.

"At this time, due to the suspicious nature of the death, based on indications at the scene, we are treating the matter as a homicide investigation," Howe said during a press conference held on Tuesday. "We are receiving leads from the public and we are following up on them."

Howe said that no suspect has been identified and her husband is not considered a suspect, at this time.

Howe said it was his understanding that Hummel was in the area to fish.

"It would seem reasonable, since the body was at the landing,



Hummel

that the crime occurred there," Howe said. "All indications are that the death occurred there. It is a very remote area."

The Highlines Boat Landing area is located south of Gayville and Meckling.

"It is a State Park boat ramp on the Missouri River," Howe said. "The State Park has an employee that monitors the boat ramp and he is the person that found the body. She was found in the water. The area is a popular boat landing (but) she was not using a boat."

Due to the nature of her death, Howe said the search for evidence has been extensive. He noted water depth in the area fluctuates from several inches above sand bars to 12 feet deep.

"The other units, including search and rescue, are just trying to cover all the basics so that we don't leave any stone unturned, literally," he said. "So, we are doing all we can to do a thorough search of that area so we don't have to wish we had at a later time."



SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK
Clay County Sheriff, Andy Howe, addresses the media during a press conference held Tuesday regarding the suspicious death of Alicia Hummel.

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COURTESY PHOTO

According to Vermillion Fire Chief R. Shannon Draper, Saturday's structure fire very easily could have been fatal, if not for a pet alerting the renter to the danger. He said the situation is the perfect example of why working smoke detectors are so important.

A Close Call

Weekend Fire Shows Worth Of Fire Detectors

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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According to Vermillion Fire Chief R. Shannon Draper, Saturday's structure fire very easily could have been fatal, if not for a pet alerting the renter to the danger.

He said the situation is the perfect example of why working smoke detectors are so important.

"The individual who

was in this fire over the weekend, literally the day before the fire was talking about how they should have smoke detectors," he said. "They had that conversation with family members. Really they are a very, very lucky individual that she made it out of that house. It was a very fast moving fire and if the dog had not woken her up, it would have been a fatal fire, I am certain of it. It was a very hot, fast

moving fire. She was very lucky."

According to a press release issued by the department, the renter was asleep when her dog woke her alerting her that something was wrong. When she opened her bedroom door the room quickly filled with smoke from a fast moving fire in the living room. Following direction from a 911 dispatcher she was able to jump from the window sav-

ing herself and her dog.

Crews arrived on scene confirming a working fire reporting heavy fire and smoke with flames coming from two windows and the roof. Two engine company crews made entry to extinguish the fire and encountered extremely high temperatures due to the interior finish of the home being mostly non-rated wood paneling. After a quick attack by fire crews, the fire was extinguished, limiting the fire damage to only 50% of the second floor.

"This is a great example of how when someone is

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Prentis Park Facelift Underway

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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The facelift of Prentis Park Baseball Field is underway and Jim Goblirsch director of Vermillion Parks and Recreation said he hopes that when completed later this fall it will open up opportunities for the community.

Goblirsch updated the Vermillion City Council Monday during its noon session on how the five-phase project is fairing.

"There was \$110,000 allotted in 2013 out of the second penny fund to develop a bathroom and some improvements on the baseball field at Prentis Park," he said. "We have gone through numerous options to get feelers out there to get local contractors to help us with this project. We had interest early on, but as the seasons progressed the interest from those contractors waned greatly. We couldn't get conceptual drawings from them, or any dates where they would be willing to work with us on the project. So, basically the money was put on hold for a couple of years. Recently, Builder's Choice has come in and taken a solid interest in the project and a few others, as well. So, we have been working closely with Builder's Choice on this project."

Goblirsch said phase one has been completed. "We put the house up for sale and that was removed last week," he said. "The site was removed. The basement and all other parts of the house were removed by city staff. The carport and garage were demolished by city staff. The vegetation in that area was removed, as well as vegetation around the ball park."

Noting that most of the work was done by city staff including the street and lights crew and the parks and rec staff, Goblirsch said they spent a lot of time removing stumps or grubbing the area.

"Especially in the area of the new parking lot, we needed to do that anyway on any stump greater than eight inches because over time as that stump deteriorated it would create a pothole or depression and cause the concrete to fail in that area," he said. "There was a fence in the tree line which surrounded the entire field through the tree line. We removed all that and recently, on Arbor Day there were four new trees planted in the area."

Phase two has also been completed, according to Goblirsch.

"Anybody who has been out to the ball field recently has seen that there has been a new seating berm installed out in the left field area," he said. "We had money that was raised by the Elijah Wergin Eagle Scout project



Goblirsch

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SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK
Registration for the 2015 Girls State was held Monday on the campus of the University of South Dakota. The week-long event will feature talks from public leaders and many others.

Jackley Speaks At Girls State

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

"I wanted to reflect on back when I was at Boys State in the 1980's and what I took away from these programs," South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley began in his address to hundreds of young women attending Girls' State on the University of South Dakota campus Tuesday. "I think one of the biggest opportunities you will have over this next week is to learn about government. How it functions, how important civics are and how to participate in communities better through government."

To help facilitate this learning, Jackley gave a short speech on his career and some life lessons followed by a question/answer

session.

First, Jackley encouraged the young women to value the relationships formed during the week, stating that he still keeps in touch with people he met at Boys' State.

"You go on in life and you'll keep in touch with the people you meet here which makes it such a wonderful program," he said.

Jackley also described his career path beginning at the age of most of the audience.

His interest in politics actually began watching his father run unsuccessfully for Attorney general in 1986.

"As I watched him through that process as a sophomore in high school I became interested," he said. "As I watched the process work, I think that would be the big

defining moments. And I would have to say Boys State when I really came together with folks that were interested in government and I learned about the process. Those would be the two defining moments that engaged my interest in politics."

Jackley passed through engineering and then law school and worked in various jobs.

"I started as a young associate and I found out what it was like to earn your way through," he said. "I was a young attorney in Rapid City I tried everything from murder cases to divorce cases, land transactions and about everything in between and earned my way into becoming a law partner."

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