



Friday, October 23, 2009

Police shoot hatchet-wielding man in Garibaldi

Unidentified man pronounced dead at the scene

LeeAnn Neal
Headlight-Herald Staff

Friday, October 23, 2009



Denise Vandecoevering (blonde woman in foreground) stands outside her home (the green-and-white house behind her) on 6th Street in Garibaldi among local police and emergency medical personnel. (Photo by LeeAnn Neal)

GARIBALDI - According to eyewitnesses, police shot a man armed with a hatchet outside a home here early this afternoon.

Shortly before 1 p.m., Chellisa Vandecoevering was leaving her family's home at 303 6th St. when she noticed someone had "thrown a bunch of stuff" into their yard. Then she observed a man sitting inside her parents' motor home, which was parked on the property.

Vandecoevering opened the motor home door to find out who the man was and why he was there. "He said, 'Get the hell out!'" she said. She then called 9-1-1.

Tillamook County Sheriff's deputies responded to the "burglary in progress," arriving on the scene at 12:59 p.m. and attempted to contact the suspect, according to Sheriff Todd Anderson.

"The suspect, an unknown male, 50-to-60 years of age, armed with a hatchet, advanced towards the deputies with the hatchet raised in the air," said Anderson. "The suspect refused commands and was shot."

Shortly thereafter, other local law enforcement and safety personnel arrived on the scene, including Oregon State Police, Tillamook, Rockaway Beach and Manzanita Police departments, Garibaldi Fire Department, Tillamook Ambulance and the U.S. Coast Guard, which has a station nearby.

Emergency medical personnel were observed administering aid to the man, who was lying on the ground in front of the house and motor home. At 1:25 p.m., they loaded him on a gurney into the back of an ambulance, which remained parked outside the residence.

"The suspect was pronounced dead at the scene," said Anderson.

Police blocked and taped off 6th St. from Cypress Avenue to Acacia Avenue. The scene is within half a block from Garibaldi Grade School and directly across Birch Avenue from Garibaldi Home by the Bay, an adult foster care home.

Tillamook County District Attorney Bill Porter arrived at the scene about 1:30 p.m. and was observed speaking with Anderson and other local law enforcement officials.

According to Anderson, the case is being investigated by the Tillamook County Major Crimes Team, which is composed of the Sheriff's Office, OSP, Tillamook, Rockaway Beach and Manzanita Police departments and the Tillamook County District Attorney's Office.

Meanwhile, "The two deputies involved in the incident are on administrative leave, which is a routine practice for officers involved in shootings," said Anderson.

The unidentified man was "a transient they were (recently) dealing with in Manzanita," said Denise Vandecoevering, Chellisa Vandecoevering's mother, who also lives at 303 6th.

As of 6:50 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 23, the section of road remained blocked off, as law enforcement officials continued to investigate.