

Police investigate three deaths in past week

Written by Staff Reports

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Three unrelated deaths include one homicide

The Gallup Police Department is investigating three deaths that occurred this past week.

The first occurred Sept. 14 and involved a woman who was hit by a train just north of the 2500 block of East U.S. Highway 66.

GPD Capt. Marinda Spencer said police have obtained a tentative identification of the woman, but on Sept. 20, they were still awaiting confirmation from the state Office of the Medical Investigator in Albuquerque.

The body was found on the embankment just south of the train tracks; the Native American woman apparently died after being struck by a train. There were no reports of drug use and

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police are still trying to determine the circumstances of her death.

A second body was found in downtown Gallup Sept. 15, and because of the type of injuries suffered by the unidentified Native American woman, police suspected a homicide.

The body was discovered at the former A. C. Houston Lumber Co. building under a sign welcoming visitors to Gallup.

Among the injuries to the body were stab wounds. The body was sent to Albuquerque for an autopsy to determine the actual cause of death.

On Sept. 17, Marnell Lovato, 28, of Gallup turned herself in.

She was charged with second-degree murder and tampering with evidence. Her arrest warrant states that she claimed she was intoxicated when she got into an argument with a woman she did not know in the downtown area of Gallup on Sept. 15.

She said she was walking down the street intoxicated when she saw the woman and got into a fight, although she did not remember what the two fought about.

Meanwhile, a third body was found Sept. 18 at the west-side Days Inn, 1603 W. Highway 66, in one of the rooms by motel management.

Spencer said the woman, who was from out of state and was in her late 80's or early 90's, apparently died of natural causes. Foul play is not suspected in this case, Spencer said.