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Todd Jarvis
Chief of Police

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 3, 2024

Subject: Update to October 23, 2023 Death Investigation

The Eureka Police Department has concluded its investigation into the human remains located at an extinguished fire on October 23, 2023, which occurred to the rear of the Bayshore Mall.

The decedent has been identified as twenty-seven-year-old Richard George Shannon. The identification was made with the assistance of a witness who had seen Shannon at the encampment prior to the fire, as well as DNA results received during the investigation.

The investigation revealed that Shannon was witnessed using fentanyl at the encampment earlier in the evening and was exhibiting signs of an overdose. Fentanyl was confirmed in Shannon's system through a toxicology report conducted as a part of the autopsy. It appears the warming fire Shannon had built spread and ignited a fiberglass truck canopy that he was using as a make shift shelter. It is suspected that Shannon was unconscious or suffering from a drug overdose and was unable to extract himself from his shelter or the fire.

There were no signs of foul play located at the encampment, as well as no evidence that indicated Shannon had been deceased and moved to this location. Due to the high heat level generated by the fire and the damage caused to Shannon's person, the cause of death has been listed as undetermined by the Coroner's Office.

On October 23, 2023, at about 1155 hours, Humboldt Bay Fire (HBF) responded to the report of smoke in the greenbelt north of the Bayshore Mall. Upon arrival, HBF located a smoldering fire at an encampment. During fire suppression efforts, HBF personnel located human remains. Eureka Police Department Criminal Investigations Unit (CIU) Detectives and the Humboldt County Coroner's Office responded and processed the scene. This is an active investigation.

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