

All lives matter

Written by By Bernie Dotson
Friday, 29 July 2016 04:09



Stay patient after GPD shooting

The July 24 early-morning fatal shooting of an armed Gallup man by local police demands a full and thorough investigation. The death of any citizen at the hands of a police officer is bound to produce strong emotions and a quest for the truth.

The matter also demands the community remain calm and patient.

The New Mexico State Police is piecing together the facts that culminated in the death of 29-year-old Alvin Sylversmythe at the Arnold Street public housing.

The Gallup Police Department immediately put the investigation in the hands of the NMSP to avoid bias, which is proper. The state police will take an independent look at what exactly happened. Then its findings will be turned over to a New Mexico District Attorney's office, who will determine if any criminal charges will be filed.

In the meantime, there are reports that six city police officers have been placed on paid administrative leave as the investigation takes its due course. That's routine in such matters.

Indeed, it's important at this point not to prejudge the officers involved in the shooting. While there are witnesses who saw what happened, NMSP needs time to fully process all of the information and to talk to as many witnesses as possible, as well as to the officers who responded to the incident. The investigators need time and space to do what is fair and just.

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Citizens should keep their cool as the state investigation proceeds. Jumping to conclusions is not the wise thing to do.

In the meantime, questions are swirling. The most obvious being why the cops unloaded on a man armed with knives, who was already at a short distance from them. But according to reports, the knife-wielding Sylversmythe apparently looked as though he was going to charge the officers, who feared for their own lives.

While it's natural for people to draw premature conclusions and to be upset, it's wrong for anyone to fan the flames of rumor and innuendo without the necessary facts. The incident illustrates that there is no such thing as a routine call for a law enforcement officer.

The answers to the whole unfortunate situation will come out soon. All lives matter: Pray for the family of the victim, and remember to thank a police officer, as blue lives matter, too.

By Bernie Dotson