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ALERT

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UPDATE: DA: Bystander assisted police officer during shootout

By ERIC POOLE Herald Editor
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Police tape and a "ROAD CLOSED" sign mark off the site of an exchange of fire between a Farrell police officer and an unidentified man early Friday morning along Indiana Avenue in Farrell.

DAVID DYE | Herald



FARRELL — A “good guy with a gun” reportedly came to the aid of a Farrell police officer during a shootout early Friday morning.

“He had a valid concealed-carry permit, he had a gun,” Mercer County District Attorney Peter C. Acker said. “He went to where the police officer was and fired on the suspect.”

State police and county district attorney’s office detectives are continuing to investigate the incident, which took place about 12:30 a.m. Friday outside a convenience store along Indiana Avenue in Farrell.

Acker said the suspect, identified only as a 49-year-old white man, was undergoing treatment Friday evening at Mercy Health St. Elizabeth Hospital in Youngstown for life-threatening injuries.

The man was wounded in an exchange of gunfire with police shortly after midnight outside a convenience store along Indiana Avenue in Farrell. The incident began when a Farrell police officer encountered the man and determined that the man, who has not been named, was carrying a weapon.

Acker said the 49-year-old did not cooperate with police and refused to disarm. Instead, the man began shooting and the police officer returned fire along with the bystander.

After the man was wounded, he still refused to surrender the weapon. Acker said the police officer also fired bean-bag rounds during the incident, and police used an armored personnel carrier provided by Mercer County Critical Incident Response Team to disarm the man.

Acker said the three men fired more than 40 bullets and the police officer fired about 12 or 13 bean-bag rounds.

“When you have somebody with a gun, who has demonstrated that he’s willing to use it, you have to exercise great caution, which is what they did,” Acker said.

The man was taken to UPMC Horizon hospital in Farrell then flown by medical helicopter to St. Elizabeth.

The Indiana Avenue shooting took place only moments after an earlier, unrelated, incident at a home along Emerson Avenue in Farrell.

Acker said someone shot at the house in what he called a drug-related drive-by. That incident remains under investigation.

With the Indiana Avenue incident, the state police investigation will focus on exactly who fired the shots that wounded the initial shooter, and the potential charges against the 49-year-old if he survives.

“There are two really separate components,” Acker said. “The first one is the officer-involved shooting. When an officer is on the scene and bullets are discharged, it cannot be investigated by the parent police department. The second is that bullets were flying around in the middle of Farrell at 12:30 a.m.”

“That’s not what you want to see in the community.”

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