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WILLMAR, MINN.

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Olivia mayor responds to death

Hawkinson expresses frustrations at recent tragedies in town

By Shelby Lindrud
West Central Tribune

OLIVIA — They are remarks Olivia Mayor Jon Hawkinson probably hoped he would never have to write. But with the tragic death of Isaac Hoff, 13, stunning the community, Hawkinson decided he needed to respond.



Hawkinson

"I am broken-hearted and stunned to find our community struggling with yet another tragedy in our midst," Hawkinson said in a release sent out late Friday evening. "While saying that my thoughts and prayers are with everyone touched by this senseless tragedy might sound trite and cliché, it nevertheless is a true statement of where my mind and heart is at this moment."

It has been a rocky year for the city known as the Corn Capital of the World. In July, Olivia Police officer Aaron Clouse shot and killed Ricardo Torres Jr. on the same block where the apartment Hoff was stabbed in is located. Clouse was found justified for his actions by the Blue Earth County Attorney's Office and no charges were filed. Then in December BOLD High School sophomore Carter Brems-eth passed away, in what his family later released was a suicide.

"I feel frustrated at the parade of horrific situations our community has endured," Hawkinson said.

Hawkinson is also angry at the lives lost and changed forever, angry that Olivia's reputation has been tarnished and angry at how powerless people are feeling.

"The anger I feel has me

MAYOR: Page A2



Photos by Macy Moore / West Central Tribune

Friends of 13-year-old Isaac Hoff, who was stabbed and killed early Thursday, gather to mourn his passing Friday afternoon outside the building in downtown Olivia where the stabbing took place.

Vigil for Isaac

Olivia comes together to mourn the death of teenager

By Shelby Lindrud
West Central Tribune

Olivia

It is fitting that so many people remembered Isaac Hoff as a happy and laughing teenager since his name, taken from the first book of the Holy Bible, means "one who laughs."

"He was always smiling," said Henry Meyers, lead pastor at Grace Community Church.

While there was laughter Friday night at the church in Olivia, it was sharing space with grief and pain as a large crowd attended a vigil for the 13-year old, who died early Thursday morning in a domestic abuse event, in an apartment located just above the church.

"I am so sorry for your loss," Meyers said to the congregation of friends, family, classmates and community members.

Hoff, an eighth-grader at BOLD Public Schools, died after being stabbed, allegedly by the boyfriend of his mother. The suspect, Houston Allen Morris, is facing three counts of 2nd degree murder and had his first court

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River Estrada reads messages written on the wall outside the building where 13-year-old Isaac Hoff was stabbed early Thursday in the downtown Olivia apartment. Hoff later died at the Olivia Hospital.

Avian flu is here

Infected poultry are confirmed within Meeker and Mower counties

By Kelly Boldan
West Central Tribune

ST. PAUL — The highly pathogenic avian influenza, also known as bird flu, has been confirmed in poultry flocks in Meeker and Mower counties, the state Board of Animal Health announced Saturday.

The samples from two flocks were tested on Friday at Minnesota-based testing sites and then confirmed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa.

The agency said the Meeker County flock is a commercial turkey flock of nearly 300,000 turkeys reported with mortality and signs of depression.



Tribune file photo

A flock of turkeys is shown in this undated file photo. Two poultry flocks — one in Meeker County and one in Mower County — were confirmed Saturday as infective with highly pathogenic avian influenza.

Samples were collected from the flock, which tested positive at the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory in Willmar.

The Mower County back-

yard mixed flock of 17 chickens, ducks and geese reported increased mortality. Samples were collected and submitted

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JO-OT turkey farm is infected with avian flu

Company taking precautions to protect the supply chain

By Shelby Lindrud
West Central Tribune

WILLMAR — Jennie-O Turkey Store, based in Willmar, has confirmed that one of its farms in Minnesota has been infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza.

"Jennie-O Turkey Store has been preparing for this situation and took extensive precautions to protect the health of the turkeys in the supply chain," read a press release from the company Sunday morning.

The state Board of Animal Health on Saturday announced that a commercial turkey farm, with 300,000 birds, in Meeker County had been infected with HPAI. Quarantine and depopulation

of the birds on the premises has started, the Board of Animal Health said.

It is believed migratory waterfowl play a big part in the spread of HPAI. A second case of the disease was also found in a mixed backyard flock in Mower County.

"While farms supplying turkeys to Jennie-O Turkey Store have not had any confirmed cases until now, many regions, producers and companies have been impacted since February," the Jennie-O release said. "Cases have included numerous chicken and turkey commercial farms, as well as smaller backyard flocks."

Jennie-O said it would

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