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Police seek dog that bit youngster

Lance Martin/Herald Senior Staff Writer

ROANOKE RAPIDS - Roanoke Rapids police continue to investigate a dog attack that sent a girl to the hospital Monday afternoon.

Police radio communications broadcasted numerous reports of sightings of dogs matching the description of the one that bit 2-1/2 year-old Skyler Fenner Monday. The dog is described as tannish-brown and resembling a Labrador retriever. It has a black collar.

The girl, who was transported to the University of North Carolina Medical Center in Chapel Hill, is in stable condition, city Police Chief Greg Lawson said Tuesday.

The child sustained an injury to the face when the dog bit her while she was playing outside under the supervision of her aunt and aunt's boyfriend. The boyfriend was able to get the dog off the girl.

The child was playing near dog pens the family has at their 714 Miles St. residence. Police do not know whether the stray dog became excited because of the pit bulls in the pen.



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Police do not believe that the dog belonged to the child's family. "There's nothing to say that occurred," Lawson said this morning. "According to witnesses it was not one of their dogs."

The police department's priority is to locate the dog. "We've responded to a large number of calls," Lawson said.

While none of the calls have panned out, that's OK, Lawson said. "We need the public's help."

The dog may be one that people in the area have reported seeing around Johnston, Harris and Cleveland streets, Oakley Avenue and the West 8th Street area for the past few months. "We've had people telling us they've seen it on more than one occasion," Lawson said.

Police are not sure if the dog is a stray or one that got out of its pen.

Finding the dog is crucial because it could determine who owns the animal, Lawson said. Because Roanoke Rapids has a leash law for dogs and cats, the owner could be cited under that law as well as cited for having a vicious dog, said Lawson.

If the dog is caught it will be quarantined and checked for rabies. If the dog has not been vaccinated the owner, if located, could be charged with not complying with the state's vaccination laws.

If the owner can't be found the dog will most likely be killed. Anyone who sees the dog should not approach it but notify police by calling 533-2810 of the direction the animal is heading.

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