

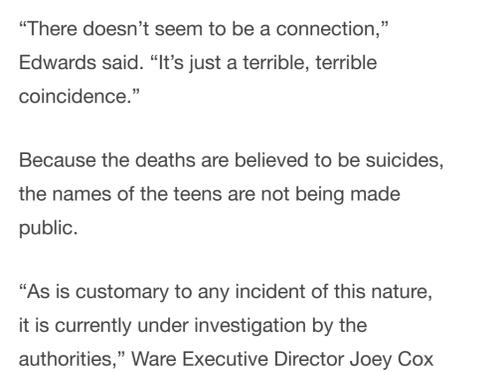
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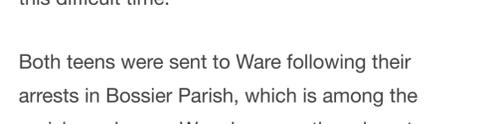
2 teens commit suicide at Ware Youth Center

Vickie Welborn Feb 11, 2019 

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Ware Youth Center.



Two teenage offenders held in Ware Youth Center in Red River Parish committed suicide within a 72-hour period in recent days, authorities said.

Red River Parish sheriff's investigators are looking into the circumstances of the 17-year-old's death Thursday night and 13-year-old's death Saturday night. Both teens hanged themselves with bed sheets, authorities said.

Red River Parish Sheriff Glen Edwards his initial information indicates the deaths are not connected and no foul play is involved.

"There doesn't seem to be a connection," Edwards said. "It's just a terrible, terrible coincidence."

Because the deaths are believed to be suicides, the names of the teens are not being made public.

"As is customary to any incident of this nature, it is currently under investigation by the authorities," Ware Executive Director Joey Cox said in a statement to KTBS News. "Our thoughts and prayers are with both of these young men and their families and friends during this difficult time."

Both teens were sent to Ware following their arrests in Bossier Parish, which is among the parishes who use Ware because they do not have a juvenile detention center.

The 17-year-old, who had recently moved to Bossier Parish from Colorado, had been arrested after he got involved in an argument with a friend in his front yard after being accused of stealing money. The teenager reportedly had a pistol in his belt. Bossier Parish sheriff's deputies were called and arrested the teenager, who escaped from the back seat of a patrol unit as a deputy questioned witnesses.

A K-9 was brought in to search the area and the teenager was eventually located in a nearby bayou. A 9mm handgun was recovered. The teen was arrested for simple escape and resisting arrest and taken to Ware until his court date.

He was checked on at 11 p.m. and nothing unusual was noted. A guard returned 15 minutes later to find the teen hanging from a sheet.

The 13-year-old, whose birthday was Jan. 20, was detained early this month on a charge of simple arson. Authorities said he set toilet paper on fire at a Haughton Middle School restroom.

During a court hearing on Feb. 4, a letter was issued seeking a psychiatric evaluation to be completed on or before March 11. It's uncertain what prompted the request.

The young teen was pronounced dead at the hospital in Coushatta.

Interviews with Ware staff and video surveillance will be used in the investigation, Edwards said. The goal also is help Ware officials understand what happened and put measures in place to prevent it from happening again.

The sheriff doesn't have a timeline on how long the investigation will take. The completed report will be submitted to the Red River Parish District Attorney's Office for review.

Ware is a state-created juvenile detention facility that's operated by a board of directors from parishes that fund its operation. It is approved by the state Office of Juvenile Justice to house pretrial and post-conviction juvenile offenders.

The last suicide reported at Ware happened in March 2017 when a 16-year-old girl from Lake Charles was found hanging from a bed sheet in her dorm room.

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Tags: Ware Youth Center, Offender, Teenager, Suicide, Red River Parish Sheriff's Office, Coushatta, Joey Cox, Law, Criminal Law, Ware, Parish, Sheriff, Teens, Handgun, Glen Edwards, Teen Authorities

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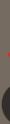
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