

Concerned residents will bury abandoned baby

By JANET BRASWELL

AMERICAN (Staff Writer)

A newborn boy abandoned at Hattiesburg's main post office may not have had much of a chance at life, but donations from area residents will give the boy a dignified burial.

Public graveside services will be held at 2:30 p.m. Thursday at Roseland Park Cemetery.

Police say they are hearing from a number of callers who want to know what they can do to help. But law enforcement officials still have no leads as to who dropped off the boy at the South 40th Avenue post office.

The baby weighed only 3 pounds, 19 1/4 ounces and was

three to four weeks premature, police Lt. Richard Cox said after receiving a preliminary autopsy report.

"I still think this is a young, frightened female who couldn't take it home with her," he said.

Forensic pathologist Steven Hayne reported the infant died of exposure, Cox said.

"The child died of hypothermia," Cox said. "Under normal conditions, it would have survived."

Rev. Eddie Edwards, pastor of Abundant Life Worship Center, will preside over services Thursday. The minister also is a rural route associate for the postal service, and one of several employ-

TO HELP

Contributions to the burial fund can be made at any Hattiesburg or Laurel branch of Deposit Guaranty National Bank.

Anyone with information about the case should call the Hattiesburg Police Department at 944-7500.

ees working since Monday to raise money for burial.

The baby, Edwards said, "is unnamed, unknown and even possibly unloved, but he is surely earned, known and loved in the life eternal. I feel for the mother and the life that was lost. Even though the baby's voice is silent,

he left a tremendous message by the way the community is responding."

A fund has been established at Deposit Guaranty National Bank.

"We just sent \$300 and something to be deposited in the account," post master Frank Ramsey said. "We've had a lot of inquiries. Mr. Buddy Winstead has agreed to donate the casket."

The money will be used for a headstone.

"The postal employees have taken this under their wing to do," said Winstead of Hulet-Winstead Funeral Home. "We'll see that the little fellow has a decent burial. Roseland Park has

offered a grave space."

The cemetery will furnish a grave site, manager Sandy Sennett said.

"It's just such a sad, sad thing," Sennett said. "It just breaks your heart."

The lack of information coming to police is unusual, he said.

"I've never seen anything like it," he said. "Somebody has to know something. We've put out contacts, but we haven't gotten any calls."

Cox speculates the mother wanted her baby to be found since he was wrapped in a towel.

"That tells me the mother does have some kind of conscience," he said.