

Did State Inspectors Drop The Ball?

Written by Steve Frank

Tuesday, 11 June 2013 15:07

The ball continues to be passed in the matter of the carbon monoxide gas that has now killed three and seriously injured one at the Best Western Plus Blue Ridge Plaza in Boone. Yesterday, paperwork surfaced that showed that the Appalachian District Health Department inspected equipment there just below room 225—where the three died—and called for action on the part of the Hotel. But today, Beth Lovette, Director of the Appalachian District Health Department said that their citation had to do with pool chemicals in an enclosed space, not carbon monoxide, “The violation noted relates to ventilation of equipment room to provide worker safety only for handling pool chemicals in a semi-confined space. Ventilation of any combustion gasses from appliances is not part of the health department pool inspection.” Lovette said that purview is part of the NC Mechanical Code under the NC Department of Insurance. Tomorrow, State Board of Examiners of Plumbing, Heating and Fire Sprinkler Contractors will be on the scene to further check that scenario. Yesterday, Boone Police and Fire released the 9-1-1 recordings of the two calls regarding the deaths at the East King Street Hotel, the first, the discovery 11-year old Jeffrey Lee Williams, apparently dead and his mother, 49-year old Jeannie Williams apparently not breathing. Boone Police Chief Dana Crawford told the press that they now have some proof of cause of death of Jeffrey Williams and Daryl and Shirley Jenkins, found dead April 16th, “As of this afternoon, Dr. Brent Hall, Regional Pathologist, was able to report Jeffrey Lee Williams was autopsied on June 9th, 2013, and preliminary indications are that he died from asphyxia.” Crawford said that the Jenkins died of carbon monoxide toxicity—their toxicology results received yesterday. It was ironic that when the Jenkins were found not breathing, two inspectors from the ARHS were there doing an unannounced inspection, and Lori Durham jumped in to do CPR, according to Lovette.