

Autopsy results awaited in murder of Argos girl

Results of an autopsy performed Friday on Brandie Peltz, who was murdered Thursday in her rural Argos home, still were being awaited today, according to Marshall County police.

Marshall County officials are investigating the death of the 11-year-old as both arson and murder. They believe she was strangled. Bruises were found on her neck, according to Marshall County prosecutor Fred Jones, who said he believes something like string, a cord or wire was used.

The Argos fifth grader was found naked, face down in a full bathtub downstairs while the upstairs of her house burned.

Michael Emenaker, a neighbor,

noticed smoke while driving by about 3:09 p.m. He drove to a nearby residence, told the occupants to call the Argos Fire Department, went back to the Peltz house, discovered the girl's body, and tried to revive her.

While Jones said the family had received several harassing telephone calls this week, Doris Stephenson, co-manager of Holland's Hardware in Argos, where the girl's mother, Roxie Peltz, works as a clerk, said the girl had received another such telephone call less than two hours before she was found strangled.

Stephenson said the girl had called her mother at the store during the afternoon to tell her about

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the telephone call.

Jones said the unidentified caller had breathed heavily but didn't speak.

The girl's father, Steven Peltz, learned of the afternoon telephone call when he stopped at the hardware store to see his wife after leaving work at Mallard Trailer Factory in Etna Green, Stephenson said.

Jones said police don't have any "hot" leads in the case.

Brandie Peltz was home from school because she was sick.

The Peltz residence is about 11 miles north of Rochester on Old U.S. 31.