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Police confirm they are looking for clues to Smolinski's disappearance

BY JONATHAN SHUGARTS | REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN



State police officials, with help from the FBI, continue to dig in the rear of the property at 160 Bungay Road in Seymour on Monday as they investigate a tip on the disappearance of Billy Smolinski Jr. of Waterbury, who was last seen Aug. 24, 2004. Officials have been excavating on the property since Friday. (Jim Shannon / RA)

SEYMOUR -- Police confirmed Monday they are searching on Bungay Road for evidence in the disappearance of Billy Smolinski Jr., a Waterbury man who has been missing since 2004.

Investigators recently developed a lead that caused them to use heavy machinery to dig at least one large hole on property at 160 Bungay Road, according to police.

The spot where investigators focused their search on Monday was in the rear of the property near a small patch of woods that separates the parcel from a nearby subdivision. The town's public works department is helping to excavate the site, which is about a half-mile from Seymour Middle School.

Smolinski was reported missing in 2004, when he was 31. In August of that year, Smolinski asked his neighbor to watch his German shepherd and mentioned he was leaving to look at a car somewhere up north. He failed to leave his neighbor his keys, which police later found with his wallet and truck at his Holly Street home.

Police in Waterbury turned over their investigation to the FBI in 2006. The federal agency has in turn assisted state and local police in the search for Smolinski.

Tips have led police to track down several leads in the case, including information that Smolinski had been killed and buried.

Last summer, police searched under the driveway of a home on Fort Hill Avenue in Shelton, but were unable to find evidence that Smolinski was buried there.

Now police say a recent lead brought them to the Bungay Road property. Lt. J. Paul

Vance, a state police spokesman, wouldn't reveal the source of the lead or say when it was received. He also declined to say what police are looking for in their search.

"What we are searching for in specifics for this case are not available at this time," Vance said. "This is an open, active investigation."

Investigators have spent three days digging on the property, and are expected to resume the search today, according to Vance.

"At this point in time, we have not located any evidence that pertains to this case," Vance said.

According to town property records, the site is owned by Susan Giordano, but Vance said she is not linked to the criminal investigation and is cooperating with investigators. She purchased the 21-acre property in 2002 for \$370,000, according to property records.

While the investigation has continued, Smolinski's family has waited for answers. Smolinski's mother, Janice, said the FBI has kept in contact with her throughout the dig in Seymour.

"The wait is hard. I know the police have been working hard," she said on Monday.

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