

Seymour land linked to missing man

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Seymour police officers were on duty Tuesday at the entrance to the Bungay Road property during the crime investigation. □(Photo by Susan Hunter)

SEYMOUR — A federal and state investigation into the 2004 disappearance of Waterbury resident William Smolinski Jr. turned its focus to a Bungay Road property over the past week. Excavation has been underway since Friday.

Digging continued Tuesday on private property at 160 Bungay Road. Seymour police vehicles blocked the driveway to the property, which State Police described as a farm with a horse stable.

Heavy equipment operated by Seymour's Public Works Department has excavated a large portion of the property.

"Some of the investigators were able to obtain information that led them to this area," said Trooper William Tate of the State Police Public Information Office.

To protect the integrity of the ongoing investigation, Tate said he couldn't disclose what specifically had led investigators to the Bungay Road location or whether the evidence sought referred to Smolinski's body.

State Police said the initiative was related to a missing person complaint filed in August 2004 about the disappearance of Smolinski, who still hasn't been found.

The investigation was turned over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in an effort to try to determine if any interstate criminal violations had taken place, according to a written statement issued Monday by State Police spokesman Lt. J. Paul Vance.

During the course of the investigation, the FBI requested the assistance of Connecticut State Police Major Crime detectives.

Since Smolinski's disappearance, FBI and State Police investigators have been working with Seymour and Shelton police, Vance said, and several police investigators have recently developed leads in the case.

The information has caused investigators to initiate a search for evidence of a crime, according to State Police. The search has received the full cooperation of the Bungay Road landowner, who has no involvement in the investigation, police said.

Investigators were on site Monday, but wet weather conditions made the excavation difficult, Tate said.

Police began a systematic search of the land on Friday, Vance said.

Search caps investigation

A similar search took place in Shelton in May 2007, according to news reports. Federal agents and State Police excavated the driveway of a private home and other locations.

Sources on Web sites devoted to Smolinski allege that he may have been ensnared in a love triangle at the time of his disappearance, and that he had lost his job shortly before.

He was working as an apprentice heating and air-conditioning technician, and as a part-time tow truck driver, according to an FBI missing person Web site. He also mowed lawns and plowed driveways.

On August 24, 2004, he asked a neighbor in Waterbury to watch his dog for a few days while he went to look at a car he thought he might wish to purchase, according to the FBI.

When no one heard from him for a few days, his family contacted Waterbury police and reported him missing.

Smolinski, who was 31 at the time of his disappearance, left behind his vehicle, wallet and keys.

Photos of "Billy" Smolinski appear on the "Billy's Guiding Light of Hope" Web site, justice4billy.com, along with poetry written by his mother, Jan Smolinski.

The site also contains music, and graphics of a flickering candle and a white dove.