

Telecommunicator Clues Lead to Missing Man

Written by Steve Frank

Most detectives are seen as gumshoe guys with a magnifying glass looking for crime clues at the scene. A Watauga telecommunicator proved early Tuesday morning that you can help solve a case even miles from the scene if you pay attention. That attention to detail for nearly rookie dispatcher Garrett Norris, working with deputy Casey Miller on a Silver Alert, led the State Patrol to find a missing Watauga County man early Tuesday—probably the victim of the heavy rains and flooding. After Norris entered the Silver Alert into the DCI system, supervisors say he received a computer 'hit' on the car tag of the 2005 Blazer of Brady Kermit Cheek, discovered missing from his Rainbow Trail home Monday evening. Norris contacted the State Patrol office in Newton to inquire about the circumstances that led the SHP to run the tag. With the flooding in the area and the urgency of the situation, Norris urged the SHP to probe further, and two state troopers returned to the scene where the crashed SUV had been found, and following the path of rushing water from the storm, found the body of 93-year old Brady Kermit Cheek on the far side of a road—apparently washed there by the flooding. The discovery came only hours before Cheek's family members were planning to search the area themselves. County Communications head Jeff Virginia commended Norris for his tenacity and attention to detail, apparent that his effort may have saved the family the heartache of finding their loved one themselves.