



## Phelps County Sheriff's Department

March 10 · 🌐

### Skeletal Remains Identified

- 1 Phelps County Sheriff Michael P. Kirn announced today that human skeletal remains discovered in Phelps County on March 3, 2026, have been positively identified.
- 2 Phelps County investigators, along with Phelps County Coroner Ernie Coverdell and investigators from the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Rolla Police Department, conducted an extensive investigation after human, skeletal remains were found in a wooded area near Rolla. The Rolla Rural Fire Protection District also provided extensive logistical assistance during the investigation.
- 3 Investigators later transported a portion of the remains to **Dr. Eric Wilson, a world-renowned forensic odontologist based in Cole Camp, Missouri.** Dr. Wilson has previously provided identification services at the 9/11 disaster site, Hurricane Katrina, and the Joplin tornado.
- 4 According to Sheriff Kirn, Dr. Wilson positively identified the remains as those of Eugene Cerney through dental records. Mr. Cerney was reported missing by his family on June 10, 2000, and was 56 years old when he disappeared from his home in central Phelps County.
- 4 At the time of his disappearance, Mr. Cerney told family members he planned to ride his bicycle to St. Robert, Missouri, and was not seen or heard from again. At that time, the Phelps County Sheriff's Department and the Missouri State Highway Patrol conducted an extensive investigation, but no leads were discovered. A bicycle was also found near the recently located remains. Next of kin have been notified.
- 5 Further routine investigation continues, and no further details will be released at this time.



### Skeletal Remains Identified as Eugene Cerney, Missing Since 2000

On March 10, 2026, Phelps County Sheriff Michael P. Kirn announced that Eugene Cerney, who was reported missing by his family on June 10, 2000, has been positively identified. He was 56 years old at the time of his disappearance from his home in central Phelps County.

Mr. Cerney was last seen after telling family members he planned to ride his bicycle to St. Robert, Missouri. He was never heard from again. At that time, the Phelps County Sheriff's Department and the Missouri State Highway Patrol conducted an extensive investigation, though no leads were discovered.

On March 3, 2026, human remains were discovered in a wooded area near Rolla. Phelps County investigators, Phelps County Coroner Ernie Coverdell, investigators from the Missouri State Highway Patrol, and the Rolla Police Department conducted the subsequent investigation. The Rolla Rural Fire Protection District provided logistical assistance throughout.

A portion of the remains were transported to forensic odontologist Dr. Eric Wilson of Cole Camp, Missouri, who positively identified them as those of Mr. Cerney through dental records. A bicycle was also recovered near the site.

Next of kin have been notified. Routine investigation continues, and no further details will be released at this time.