

## Officials ID body found near recreational area

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
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### Investigation continuing, official says

The body of a man found dead north of Hassler Valley Road and not far from ATV Motorcross road has been identified as Sergio Perez-Prieto, 41.

“We have an ID on the body,” Anthony Ashley, an investigator with the McKinley County Sheriff’s Office, said. “The investigation is still open.”

The death was ruled a homicide.

Ashley said Perez-Prieto was reported missing by family members on July 4, when he left a barbecue in the Red Hills area to take a friend home. The friend was dropped off on East Hill Avenue at around 8 pm, and that’s the last Perez-Prieto was seen.

Perez-Prieto’s car was discovered July 5 in the parking lot of the El Rancho Hotel along East Historic Highway 66. A man was seen on video exiting the vehicle and then walking east toward the commercial area along Hwy 66, Ashley said.

Ashley said the body was discovered around 12:50 pm on July 9 by a passerby who smelled a strong, unusual odor coming from the side of the roadway. He said the death appears to be the result of blunt-force trauma.

Ashley said anyone with information about the death may anonymously call the sheriff’s office at

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