

Man identified after more than 16 years after his death

- [BY SETH DUKES THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE](#)

A body that was found near mile marker 95 of I-65 in Hardin County has been identified after more than 16 years of being unknown.

The body, discovered by hunters in 2006, has been identified as Rickey Allen Leslie.

Leslie, who was 63, is believed to have died from natural causes weeks before being discovered, according to a news release from the DNA Doe Project, who collaborated with the Hardin County Coroner's Office to identify Leslie.

Shana Norton, deputy coroner, said she learned about the DNA Doe Project when a medical examiner from another state called to ask about a case she had worked on. They had used DNA Doe Project to help solve one of their unidentified persons cases.

Norton reached out about the Leslie's case, and they said they would love to help. She sent a DNA sample, and she got a report back listing Leslie as a likely identification as well as potential relatives.

"We had a male DNA match who was also a good sized X-match, and since two males can only match through the X-path on their maternal lines, this was a huge help in this case," said team leader Tracie Boyle in the release. "Once we had a candidate and

Norton reached out to Leslie's sister, who said Leslie had mental issues and previously had been in a nursing home. She said she had last seen Leslie in December of 2006 when she left him at a hotel near I-65 in Elizabethtown, intending to come back and get Leslie so he could live with her.

"When she came to get him a couple of days later, he was gone," Norton said.

Leslie is currently buried in the city cemetery as an unidentified male.

Norton said, although Leslie's death was unfortunate, it feels good to be able to help family members find peace.

"That's a huge relief for the family to know that he has been found," she said. "It's sad, obviously, because he is deceased, but they were able to have some closure."

Seth Dukes can be reached at 270-505-1413 or sdukes@thenewsenterprise.com.