

Remains of Erie man missing since 2016 identified through DNA testing

Jay Shumate was 60 when he went missing in 2016.

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ERIE, Kan. (KOAM) - Human remains discovered in 2023 near the Neosho River have been confirmed as those of an Erie man who had been missing for more than nine years, authorities announced Monday.

The Neosho County Sheriff's Office said DNA testing confirmed the remains belong to **Jay Shumate**, who was 60 years old when he disappeared in January 2016.

On Jan. 17, 2016, Erie police were first alerted when Shumate's elderly mother was found sitting in a parked pickup truck outside a local business, where she had reportedly been left since that morning. She told officers her son had gone to a "sports thing," left on foot, and never returned. She was taken home by police.



[Courtesy Kansas Missing and Unsolved.](#)

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In the days that followed, law enforcement, firefighters, and community volunteers launched extensive searches by foot, horseback, ATV and aircraft, focusing on areas south of Erie between U.S. 59 and the Neosho River. Despite reports of possible sightings, Shumate was never found.

On Feb. 13, 2023, searchers looking for deer antler sheds discovered a human skull in a flood-prone area near the Neosho River. The remains were analyzed by the Washburn University Forensic Anthropology Lab, which determined the skull likely belonged to a male.

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation assisted in the case, and DNA samples from Shumate's family were submitted to PTC Laboratories in Texas for comparison. On Aug. 25, 2025, the results confirmed the skull belonged to Shumate.

The cause of death remains unknown, authorities said.

Shumate's family has been notified.

https://www.koamnewsnow.com/news/remains-of-erie-man-missing-since-2016-identified-through-dna-testing/article_ff0bb69d-f8c0-441e-b0a0-3da32e0d431b.html

