

EDC detectives revisiting decades-old murders

By Kathryn Reed

Carol Andersen lived in Stateline, went to Whittell High School and hung out at Regan Beach. She is buried at Happy Homestead Cemetery.

What makes her story different from other people at the South Lake Tahoe graveyard is that she was murdered and the person responsible has never been caught. Her body was found alongside a road in the South Shore on July 1, 1979.

Hers is one of more than 60 cold cases the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office is reexamining.

"We don't forget murder victims in this county. It doesn't matter if it happened last week or 30 years ago, we have an obligation to do what we can to solve those cases," District Attorney Vern Pierson told *Lake Tahoe News*.

El Dorado has a higher number of cold cases compared to most counties its size and even compared to larger areas.

Andersen's case has been made into a webisode that is posted on the DA's Facebook page. About eight months ago the department started filming reenactments of cases in an attempt to remind people about the crime and try to trigger memories in order to garner new information.

The four-minute long films are paid for with Proposition 69 money that is collected from criminal penalties. A new one comes out each month.

Even though none of them has led to an arrest, leads are coming in on the various cases that have been profiled.

“Those are some of the toughest cases we have,” Pierson said. “We’ve gotten good leads we are following up on. These cases take years. Tips are leading to a lot of other stuff. Every time we put one out we get a bunch of phone calls.”

While DNA has been around for years, certain aspects of the technology have been refined which can provide new clues for investigators. Technology also is helpful with databases providing a wealth of information that is more immediate.

“Even back in 1991 when Jaycee Dugard was abducted some of those databases were not available back then,” Pierson noted in reference to the youngster who was abducted from a bus stop in Meyers and was found alive in 2009.

All of this is an extension of the Cold Case Task Force that was formalized a few years ago with the DA’s Office, South Lake Tahoe Police Department and El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department. Investigators scour reams of paperwork and other evidence that has been collected.

Pierson credits their work with getting convictions in the **Richard Swanson** and **Joseph Michael Nissensohn** cases. Both were murder cases in South Lake Tahoe.