



Search still ongoing for missing women

by Beth Aaron
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Lubbock residents, including students from Texas Tech, slowly and meticulously combed territory surrounding Lubbock Cooper High School and north Lubbock County last weekend looking for traces of missing Lubbock residents Joanna Rogers and Jennifer Wilkerson.

Julie Allen, a junior mechanical engineering major, said she and the search party were told to look for items such as jewelry and clothing that may belong to the missing persons.

Allen, a San Angelo native, said she decided to lend a hand in searching for Rogers and Wilkerson because she wanted to feel like she had done something to help.

"My heart really goes out to them every time I see one of those posters," she said. "I wanted to know that anytime I saw those posters around town, that I did something to help."

The search was conducted by the United Response Search and Rescue Team, which also conducted an extensive search in May for Rogers.

Rogers, a 17-year old Lubbock High School student, has been missing since May 4. She was last seen in her home at approximately 12:30 a.m.

When her parents woke at 7 a.m. they noted her missing and began calling friends, but were unable to locate anyone who knew her whereabouts, Sgt. Greg Parrot of the Lubbock County Sheriff's Department said.

Rogers' mother was unavailable for comment.

Wilkerson, 26, was reported missing on July 14 when she did not arrive at work after leaving her boyfriend's home at 11 a.m. the previous morning.

Parrot said Wilkerson's vehicle was discovered in front of her home, and her house and car keys were locked inside her residence.

Parrot said the only similarities noted about the two disappearances are that both girls are residents of South Lubbock, with eight to 10 miles separating the two.

"At this time," he said, "I just need to know where they're at."

Wilkerson is a white female with blue eyes and short reddish brown hair. She is about 5'5", 110 pounds and has numerous tattoos and piercings. Authorities also are looking for a suspicious vehicle in her disappearance - a small black truck that is low to the ground, with decals on the back window. It could have tinted windows and out of state license plates, and has a unique type of hubcaps on the tires.

Rogers is a white female with long red hair. She is 5'5" and 125 pounds.

The sheriff's department is aggressively looking at evidence from both cases, trying to identify a suspect, Parrot said. They have not yet identified a suspect in either case.

"At this point, we do not have anything definitive linking Joanna's disappearance to a suspect," he said. "However, we are hopeful someone with information will contact us or that we are able to glean information from interviews with her associates."

An Amber Alert was issued after Rogers' disappearance, Parrot said, but a similar alert could not be issued for Wilkerson because the circumstances surrounding the two disappearances are different, he said.

An Amber Alert is an immediate notification to media sources and law enforcement to be on the lookout, Parrot said. Lubbock residents should also be careful, he said.

"We would caution Lubbock residents or students to be cautious or be aware regardless of where they live using good common sense and judgment," he said.

Students and other residents should be cautious, Parrot said, but overall, he said situations such as these occurring in Lubbock are very rare.

"We boast a very low instance of abductions in our community," he said. "These two episodes are highly unusual and very frustrating for family members and law enforcement."

Rewards are being offered for information about both Rogers' and Wilkerson's disappearances, Parrot said. If a suspect is apprehended and convicted, he or she faces time in prison.

"We want to bring Jennifer and Joanna home to their families," he said. "Their families are hurting and experiencing a pain that no parent should ever have to endure."

Anyone with information about Joanna Rogers or Jennifer Wilkerson should call the Lubbock County Sheriff's Department at (806) 775-1406 or the United Response Search and Rescue Team at (817) 501-9296.

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