

# Losey Lee Bennett

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## State park retiree dies from injuries sustained in beating

By Greg Jordan  
FOR THE REGISTER-HERALD

PRINCETON — A Pipestem man who was found severely beaten at a state park in Mercer County last week died Tuesday at a Roanoke, Va., hospital.

Losey Lee Bennett, 55, was found with severe head injuries last Thursday morning at Pinnacle Rock State Park off U.S. 52 near Bramwell. A recently retired maintenance supervisor at Pipestem Resort State Park in Summers County, Bennett was working part-time at Pinnacle Rock.

Bennett's family notified authorities Tuesday that he died between 1 and 2 p.m., State Police Cpl. M.A. Smith in Princeton said.



Bennett

See BEATING, 12A

### BEATING

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Smith said he was making arrangements to transport Bennett's remains to the state medical examiner's office in South Charleston for an autopsy. The type of charges any suspect would face would depend on the exact cause of death, he said.

Investigators said Bennett's wallet was missing when he was found.

Bennett had been working near a picnic shelter adjoining the stone formation that gives the park its name. Park Superintendent Frank Ratcliffe told investigators he had spoken to Bennett by phone at

approximately 4:15 p.m. last Wednesday about some rented equipment being delivered. Bennett was found unconscious the next morning by his son and Ratcliffe.

Ken Caplinger, acting state parks chief, said at the time Bennett was found that the former maintenance supervisor was a skilled electrician who was helping install new electrical service at Pinnacle Rock.

"I never saw him angry. Everybody just respected him," said Estella Akers of Hinton, who worked with Bennett at Pipestem Resort State Park. "It's just a tragedy. He was just the best man in the world. He was so talented and his men just loved him. Everybody just loved him."

*"He was a tremendous employee, very dedicated, who worked late and worked whatever hours it took to get the job done."*

STEVE BOLAR,  
park superintendent

Bennett had worked at Pipestem for more than 30 years, Steve Bolar, the park's superintendent, said.

Besides working at the park, Bennett was also a former chief of the Pipestem Volunteer Fire Department and a U.S. Marine Corps veteran.

"He was a tremendous employee, very dedicated, who worked late and worked whatever hours it took to get the job done,"

Bolar said. "He was a great person in the community. He often assisted the elderly because he was so talented in different mechanical fields, and he didn't charge people."

Anyone with information about the case is urged to contact the State Police detachment in Princeton at 425-2101 or 425-2102.

— Greg Jordan is a member of the Bluefield Daily Telegraph editorial staff.