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# Perry County authorities investigate death

## Second incident in two years at popular hangout

By ANDREA HANNON  
Gannett News Service

NEW LEXINGTON — Perry County Sheriff William Barker knows too well abandoned strip mines are a favorite hangout for young people.

And now, as his office investigates yet another drowning at an area quarry — the second such death in as many years — Barker hopes more young people will finally take his warnings to heart.

“There are great dangers in places like that,” Barker said Monday of a weekend drowning at Chapman Quarry. “They have

these old, abandoned strip mines that are enticing (to young people).”

Jeffery A. Mills, 21, of Glouster in Athens County, was pronounced dead at the scene after falling off a cliff and into the quarry. Barker said the incident occurred about 4:16 p.m. Saturday at an area known as Turkey Run, located just off Pike Township Road 395 near New Lexington.

Mills body was recovered from the quarry and sent to the Franklin County Coroner's Office for an autopsy. Barker said it was unclear whether Mills'

death was the result of a drowning or the result of injuries sustained in the fall.

“At this point, we have nothing to indicate there was any foul play,” Barker said.

Mills was at the quarry with three friends from Glouster when the accident occurred. One woman told authorities she tried to stop Mills from getting to close to the cliff's edge when he lost his balance, slipped and fell.

Barker said the private property is owned by Charles Owen, of New Lexington, but is by overseen the Ohio Department

of Natural Resources, which regulates the number of hunting and fishing permits issued for the quarry and surrounding woods. There is no fence around the property, but Barker said warning signs and no trespassing signs are posted throughout the area.

Mills was a father of one and a 2001 graduate of Trimble High School in Glouster. He is survived by several family and friends, including his mother and stepfather, Holly and Kim Keirns.

Reporter Andrea Hannon can be reached at  
ahannon@nncogannett.com

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