

CRIME

# Keeping pace with criminals

■ **SHARE:** Sometimes the bad guys win, but a law enforcement conference sought to change that in the cases of 27 women.

By Ron Davis  
The News-Leader

It first sounds preposterous, the notion that law enforcement agencies don't communicate well with one another. Find a working lawman or woman and not far away you'll usually find some sort of telecommunications: a two-way radio, a cell phone, a fax, a computer.

Regardless of jurisdiction — and the squabbles and jealousies that arise from such sectoring — theory holds that cops should ignore borders and work together. It's the only way to keep pace with criminals who hopscotch from place to place, precisely to avoid arousing suspicion.

For whatever reason — crushing

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► List of cases, and who to call if you have information.

work loads, lean staffing, stubborn pride — if the police don't compare notes on local crimes, or do so only fitfully, they could miss out on a pattern. A trend. An arrest.

Turns out they already may have.

Last Thursday in Springfield, of-

ficers from seven Midwestern states and the FBI convened a first-ever conference and acknowledged the need for better crime-fighting communications. The meeting apparently was a hit; several attendees praised conference organizer David Asher, a Springfield police sergeant, and said they look forward to future gatherings.

But such optimism was tempered by the name of this two-day meeting: SHARE. Solving Homicides and Reviewing Evidence.

To be precise, the disappearance

or slaughter of 27 women, including 18 from the Ozarks.

All unsolved.

Some, perhaps, linked.

## What they learned

To tie all 27 women to one serial criminal is almost surely wrong; although attendees wouldn't talk specifics, several noted that the ear-

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(Hair color was one factor linking many of the victims.)*