

Deaths puzzle cops

MOUNT VERNON, Ill. (UPI) — A rural Ina man who had been sought for questioning in the beating death of his pregnant wife and 3-year-old son was found slain in what authorities said Friday apparently was a triple homicide.

The state Division of Criminal Investigation and the Jefferson and Franklin county sheriff's departments formed a task force to investigate the slayings and appealed to the public for help in solving the case.

"We have no theories about a motive," said DCI spokesman Connell Smith.

The trail of death ended Thursday evening along a road near Rend Lake College in rural Ina, south of Mount Vernon, when hunters found the body of Russell Dardeen, 29. At the time, Dardeen was being sought for questioning in the deaths of his wife and son.

The bodies of Dardeen's wife, Ruby, and the couple's son, Peter, were found late Wednesday in their mobile home along Illinois 37 south of Ina, Jefferson County Sheriff Bob Pitchford said. Mrs. Dardeen was seven months pregnant.

Jefferson County Coroner Richard Garretson ruled all three deaths were homicides, adding that Russell Dardeen's injuries were definitely not self-inflicted.

He said a blunt instrument apparently was used in all three deaths. Garretson also said all three probably were killed at the same time — sometime Wednesday morning and were apparently killed 6 to 12 hours before the bodies of Mrs. Dardeen and her son were found in

their mobile home about 7 p.m.

Authorities said the mother and son apparently were last seen alive between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. Tuesday.

Authorities said Russell Dardeen's car, a 1981 red Plymouth, was found in Benton on a bank parking lot by police around 1:30 a.m. Thursday.

Garretson said the "bludgeoning head wounds" suffered by the mother and child were of a different type from those suffered by Dardeen. There were some reports that it appeared that Dardeen's body may have been dragged.

His body was found a few feet inside the Franklin County line between the Rend Lake College baseball diamond and the Rend Lake Conservancy District shooting range.

Larry Foster, manager of the Rend Lake Conservancy District at Benton, said Russell

Dardeen had been employed by the district's Intercity Water System for about two years after working 6½ years for the city of Mount Carmel at its water plant.

Foster said Dardeen was a "fine... very punctual" worker and did not show up Monday to pick up his paycheck. Foster

said the district's water superintendent went to the Dardeens' mobile home but could not raise anyone and notified authorities.

Jefferson County deputies discovered the bodies of the mother and son about 7 p.m. Wednesday after receiving a call from Dardeen's mother expressing concern about the well-being of her son and daughter-in-law.

Authorities appealed to anyone with information about the deaths to call (618) 244-2141, (618) 438-4841 or (618) 997-9431.

Spending cuts increases in bu

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Congressional negotiators said Friday they reached agreement on a deficit-cutting package of taxes and spending cuts and were on their way to the White House to enlist President Reagan's support.

"This is a real agreement," said House Democratic leader Thomas Foley of Washington. But he added that the package still needs Reagan's go-ahead

defense cuts.

Formal announcement of a compromise would come too late for the government to avoid the initial phases of a \$23 billion automatic spending cut. But Rep. William Gray, D-Pa., chairman of the House Budget Committee, said on NBC's "Today" program that the developing compromise probably will turn the harsh automatic cuts into a "paper