



STEPHEN JACKSON, ONLINE NEWS EDITOR

## Where is Steven Koecher?

POSTED: JAN 20, 2010 12:10 PM MST

UPDATED: JAN 24, 2010 11:39 AM MST



30-year-old Steven Koecher

**HENDERSON, Nev.** -- Steven Koecher pulled his car into a Sun City Anthem neighborhood in Henderson, parked at the end of a cul-de-sac and walked away.

That was on December 13, 2009. He hasn't been seen since.

Koecher lived in St. George, Utah, and so it's the location where he went missing that baffles his family and friends most of all. The last known images of Koecher were captured by a home surveillance system in the Sun City neighborhood where his car was parked. On the video tape, he's seen turning a corner, crossing the street and walking out of the frame.

This is one of last clues of Koecher's whereabouts. He had no ties to the area.



"We have no idea why he was there. We've checked text messages and voicemail messages. No calls were tied to this," said Koecher's mother, Deanne.

Koecher moved to St. George in April of 2009. The 30-year-old was tired of the gloomy Salt Lake City winters and working the graveyard shift. He left a job at the Salt Lake Tribune to pursue employment in warmer climes. A devout member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Koecher found a community ready to take him in and help him stay on his feet. But finding work in a small town during the Great Recession proved tougher than he anticipated. "He had a hard time looking for a job. There were hundreds of people applying for the same jobs he was applying for," said his mother.

[Print a missing persons flyer of Steven Koecher](#)



The job hunt is what family members think may have brought Koecher to the Las Vegas Valley.

In the days after Koecher's disappearance, his cousin, K.C. Naegle, started a Facebook group called "[Help Us Find Steven Koecher](#)."

"I just invited my Facebook friends and it took off from there," she said. "It's a real comfort to his mother because everyone is so nice in that group."

Membership in the group has exploded – at last count, the tally had surpassed 15,000 people.

Using social media, friends, family and people who have never known Steven have joined together to help find him. Tips have come in. Some seem unlikely, like the theory that Steven's disappearance is related to missing West Valley, Utah mom [Susan Powell](#). Other tips have been disappointing – one Facebook tipster reported seeing Koecher on a bus near Martin Luther King Blvd. and Craig Road. The family checked out that lead, but it went nowhere.

The online group is informal enough that people feel comfortable relaying even the smallest tip or idea, Naegle said – thoughts or information people may not feel warrant a call to police are easy to report over Facebook, where anyone who wants to help can have direct access to Koecher's family.

Facebook is also giving the family a new way to investigate. Friends have signed on to report Koecher's whereabouts in the days leading up to his disappearance.

With help from people online, [a timeline of Koecher activities has developed](#), adding more layers to the mystery.

On December 9, Koecher dropped in on friends in [Ruby Valley, Nevada](#). The visit was not planned and his hosts were surprised to see him. They exchanged pleasantries and ate lunch together. During the conversation, Koecher mentioned he was heading to Sacramento, but bad weather may have changed his mind. After the visit, bank records show he stopped in [Wendover, Nevada](#) and made a purchase.

The next day, Koecher bought \$32.88 worth of gasoline in [Springville, Utah](#) and started heading back south. He stopped again in [Nephi, Utah](#) for lunch before making his way back to [St. George](#).

On December 12, Koecher bought gasoline in [Mesquite, Nevada](#). No one has been able to explain why he was in Mesquite, some 40 miles south of St. George. On the same day, he bought Christmas presents for his brother's children. He was seen by a neighbor arriving back at his St. George apartment around 10 p.m. The same neighbor saw him leave again at about 10:30 p.m. that evening.

The next morning, several people call Koecher trying to coordinate their Sunday church services. He talks to multiple people, telling them he's in Las Vegas – 150 miles away from home --- but can make it back to the meeting if they need him. The men decide they can cover services without him and Koecher remains in Las Vegas.

Two hours later, Koecher appears on the surveillance tape in [Sun City Anthem](#). All told, Koecher drove at least 1,200 miles in three days.

The next day, a call is made from Steven's phone to his voicemail service. Since then, his phone has not been used to make any calls, and his bank account has remained inactive -- family members say no money taken out, and none put in.

To a casual observer, the travel surrounding Steven's disappearance seems unusual. But family says it just shows the patterns of a 30-year-old trying to stay busy while looking for work.

"He was a family history buff and liked to do cemetery tours. We have family from the St. George area and his parents loved getting the tours," said Naegle.

Three days after the car was abandoned, Steven's parents received a call from the Henderson parking authority. "That's when we got that sickening call... We could care less about the car. We were just frightened knowing our son had been missing for that long," said Deanne.

Steven's father, Rolf Koecher, hit the road a few hours later and was baffled when he saw where the car was abandoned. It had half a tank of gas, and started up just fine, he said.

"We were wondering why it was here – some clue to why it was here," Rolf said. "That's a hard place to get to and so it had to be a destination of some sort."

The Koecher family has since tried everything to find their son. They had a Salt Lake City Police drug dog sniff the car for narcotics. Nothing was found. They hired a private investigator to canvass the senior citizen neighborhood. No one saw anything. They tracked down the owner of an SUV seen driving up and down the street in the surveillance video. It turned out to be a real estate agent showing a house. It's been more than five weeks and still nothing.

"Late at night, when you can't think of anything else to do, that's when it becomes very difficult," said Rolf.

The family has visited the Las Vegas valley three times since Koecher went missing, even enlisting the help of the [Nevada Center for Missing Loved Ones](#) to canvass the area on ATV's and from the air. Still no sign of Koecher, but they're not giving up. Another visit is planned in late January.

If you have seen Steven Koecher, call the Henderson Police Department at 267-4750 or the St. George Police Department at 435-627-4301. You can also send tips to the family through their Facebook group.



All content © Copyright 2000 - 2010 WorldNow and KLAS. All Rights Reserved.  
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).