



Major Case Squad

**Chairman of the Board
Chief Ray Johnson**

of Greater St. Louis



February 13, 2018

Press Release

The Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis has conducted twelve days of exhaustive investigative effort into the disappearance of Denita Hedden. It was reported that Denita was last seen on the 700 block of Catalpa, Royal Lakes, Illinois on January 25, 2018, at 11:00p.m.

An extensive search operation, spanning seven consecutive days, has covered large portions of southern Macoupin County. First responders by way of land and air have canvassed over 35 square miles. This endeavor has included more than 22,400 acres of rural terrain and 70 road miles. Search efforts have continued into Tuesday, February 13, 2018.

Investigative effort by the Major Case Squad has led to the conclusion that Denita Hedden has met with foul play. This conclusion is based on a myriad of factors including, but not limited to, evidence recovered during the squad's investigation. No information related to the evidence in this case will be released at this time. A person of interest has been identified by the Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis. The facts and circumstances surrounding this case have been provided to the office of Macoupin County State's Attorney Jennifer Watson.

The Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis wants to emphasize the importance of Macoupin County property owners, farmers, and residents, inspecting their property for anything unusual in the interest of finding Denita. Investigators implore local residents traveling county and rural roadways to report anything unusual they may encounter or observe. This request is made not only to those residing in the immediate vicinity of Royal Lakes, but also areas which may extend beyond perceived search boundaries. Even if first responders and search teams have been in your area please take a moment to check your surroundings.

Denita a white female, is 5'0", and weights approximately 110 lbs. She was last observed wearing a maroon Nike hoodie sweatshirt, blue jeans, and brown boots. She was wearing hoop earrings. Images of Denita Hedden taken on January 25, 2018, are attached to this press release for review.

The Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis extends prayers to the family and friends of Denita Hedden in this most trying of times. Numerous police, fire, and specialized search teams, have spent hundreds of man-hours in the interest of finding Denita Hedden. Search efforts continue. The investigation into this matter has transitioned back to the Macoupin County Sheriff's Office.

St. Louis Regional Crimstoppers

1-866-371-TIPS (8477)

Macoupin County Sheriff's Office

217-854-3135 Ext: 1

Macoupin and Montgomery County Crime Stoppers

1-800-352-0136

Lt. Kristopher Tharp/Deputy Commander-Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis