

# Grafton Police Chief: Remains found are presumed those of Heather L. Bardsley

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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**GRAFTON** - An autopsy was performed at 5 p.m. on Friday, March 11, 2016, at **Saint Elizabeth's Hospital** in Belleville on the body that was discovered by a fisherman in the Mississippi River.

The body was found on Thursday, March 10, at the Piasa Harbor area, just south/east of Grafton, where she was discovered.

**Jersey County Coroner Larry Alexander** along with the **Grafton Chief of Police Marshall Lewis** were able to conclude a positive identification that the remains are presumed those of **Heather L. Bardsley**, pending dental examiner review, Chief Lewis said. An official ruling will be issued once the dental review is completed, Lewis said.

Lewis said there were several circumstantial items of evidence that identifies the remains that of Heather L. Bardsley.

“At this time, there are no signs of foul play, however the investigation remains ongoing and open,” Lewis said. “The manner and cause of death are pending the official Coroner’s and Pathologist’s reports.

“The evidence remains consistent with the original theory that Heather may have been swept up in flash floods during the major winter flooding. It is believed that her remains were under water since the time of her missing and recently surfaced due to the recent warm weather.”

At approximately 2 p.m. on Dec. 27, 2015, the **Grafton Police Department** was contacted about a missing person; at the time 41-year-old, white female, by the name of Heather L. Bardsley. She was last seen approximately between 10:30 p.m.-11:00 p.m. the night of Saturday, Dec. 26, 2015, after being dropped off in front of her residence.

At approximately 12:30 p.m. on March 10, 2016, Grafton Police officer was notified by local fishermen about something they noticed in the Mississippi River approximately 6 miles south/east of Grafton, Lewis said.

The Grafton Police officer immediately followed up on that lead and came to the conclusion that it was the remains of a human body. The officer contacted Jersey County Sheriff’s Office and they dispatched an Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officer, QEM Fire Department, and contacted the Illinois State Police to request a Crime Scene Investigator. The Jersey County Coroner Larry Alexander and the Jersey County Sheriff Mark Kallal also arrived on scene.