

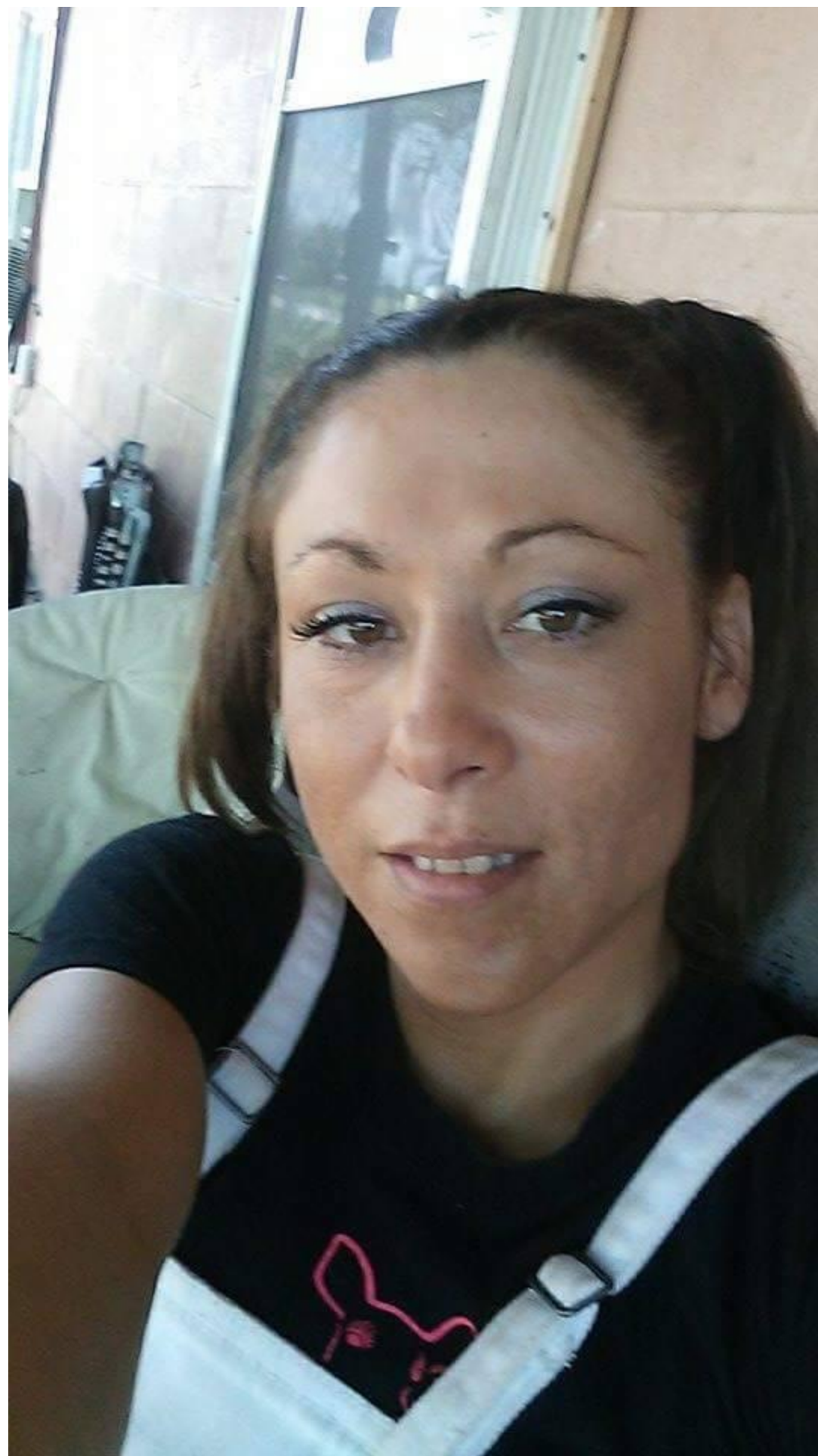
# Massive search continues for clues in missing woman's case

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ROYAL LAKES - A massive search with area law enforcement has taken place the past few days for missing person Denita M. Hedden, 37, of Royal Lakes, in a large area that includes not only Royal Lakes, but surrounding areas.

“There are approximately 100 participants involved in the search effort,” Lt. Kristopher Tharp, Deputy Commander of the Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis, said today. He is also a Madison County Sheriff’s Office representative in the case. “There are participants involved in the search representing police and sheriff’s departments, search and rescue teams, and fire departments from all over the state of Illinois and Missouri.”

Hedden was reported missing by an acquaintance at 11:49 a.m. on Jan. 28, 2018. Macoupin County deputies were told that Denita was last seen leaving her residence in Royal Lakes, Illinois, around 2 p.m. on January 25, 2018 (Thursday). Denita was last seen wearing a maroon hoodie sweatshirt with orange sleeves and blue jeans. Denita is 5’00” and weights approximately 110 pounds. She has brown hair and brown eyes.

The Illinois State Police air operations crew has also been involved in the search. The fact that Hedden has had no contact with family and friends for an extended amount of time raises considerable concern. This disappearance, due to its duration, is considered suspicious.

“We are covering a rather large geographical area,” Tharp said. “The best way to put in perspective is to include Royal Lakes and areas northwest and southwest of Royal Lakes. These denote areas near her home and areas she frequented. The areas near her home are very rural and isolated areas and consists of wooded and agricultural areas. This requires a lot of people to cover.”

He continued and said, “the search is ongoing, but this is an effort to make a dent or find clues as to why she so abruptly went missing. Some missing items may well fill in the missing puzzle piece. We hope to have some answers to questions we have.”

Anyone with any information concerning Hedden contact any of the following numbers:

**Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis**  
618-585-3510

**Macoupin County Sheriff’s Office**  
217-854-3135 Ext: 1

**Macoupin and Montgomery County Crime Stoppers**  
1-800-352-0136





[Chris Rhodes also contributed to this story.](#)