

Clothes found in river month after slaying

By Kathy Oechsle
The News-Leader

HERMITAGE — More than a month after Trudy Darby's body was found in the Little Niangua River, items of her clothing have been found a half-mile downstream, Hickory County Sheriff Ray Tipton said Monday.

A Tunas resident reported finding a tennis shoe and an undergarment near Erickson's Ford on Saturday. Tipton and conservation agent Calvin Jones searched the area and

found jeans and a flannel shirt in the creek Sunday. The clothing was identified by Darby's family, Tipton said.

No blood was visible on the clothing, Tipton said, and it was not torn.

"It's been in the stream for a month," Tipton said Monday, "so we'll have to see what the lab finds."

The clothing was sent to the Missouri State Highway Patrol laboratory in Jefferson City.

Tipton said he had hoped clues would be found in another location.

"This just tells us what we already knew," he said.

Darby, 42, was shot twice in the head, Hickory County Coroner Rusty Boller said. He was unable to determine if she had been sexually assaulted. Her body was found two days after she was apparently abducted from the K and D Country Corners convenience store near Macks Creek, where she was a night clerk.

Darby's son, Wayne Darby, told police his mother called him about 10 p.m. and asked him to come to the store because there was a "strange man" outside the store.

When Wayne Darby arrived five minutes later, his mother was gone. Her purse, coat and vehicle were left at the store.

Area residents have reported to the sheriff's department that they saw a heavy-set man with a beard sitting in a vehicle near U.S. 54 and Missouri 73 about the time Darby disappeared.

☐ Hearing/Council hears grant requests

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In past years, requests for federal funds often kept the council in session until midnight, they said.

Cantrell said the hearing was shorter because of a decision to limit presentations to one speaker.

program sponsored by the Springfield Area Literacy Council.

In other matters Monday night:

■ The council approved a resolution declaring old Lincoln High School — now part of the Graff