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**NEWS RELEASE**

**LAKEVILLE DAD FOUND GUILTY OF NEGLIGENCE FOR LEAVING HIS CHILD**

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom announced that Steven Alexander Cross, age 60 and formerly of Lakeville, was found guilty by a Dakota County Jury of one count of Neglect of a Child (a gross misdemeanor) in connection with abandoning his 11-year-old son on July 18, 2011. Cross left in the night after his son went to bed, leaving him a letter saying he was going away, apparently forever, and instructing him to go to a neighbor's home. Cross was found 43 days later in California after these criminal charges were filed.

Judge Robert King ordered a pre-sentence investigation and set the sentencing for March 20, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in Hastings. The jury deliberated for less than one hour. Backstrom noted that there is also an ongoing child protection proceeding in Dakota County concerning the welfare of this boy.

Backstrom commented: "Steven Cross' actions in abandoning his child showed a callous disregard for his son's well-being. We are pleased the jury has held him accountable for his actions."

Backstrom thanked the Lakeville Police Department for their thorough investigation in the matter and praised Assistant County Attorney Nicole Nee for her work on this case.

For a copy of the criminal complaint, go to <http://services.co.dakota.mn.us/ComplaintSearch>.

If you have questions, contact James Backstrom at 651-438-4440.