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NEWS RELEASE

**ROSEMOUNT MAN SENTENCED FOR LEAVING THE SCENE OF AN
ACCIDENT THAT KILLED AN APPLE VALLEY WOMAN IN 2009**

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom announced that Eric James Hunter, age 44 of Rosemount, was sentenced today by Judge David Knutson to 60 days in jail, 30 days of Sentence-to-Serve and probation for three years in connection with leaving the scene after hitting 26-year-old Joan LeVasseur, of Apple Valley, on March 6, 2009. LeVasseur later died from her injuries. The Defendant is also ordered to pay restitution in an amount to be determined. Judge Knutson stayed the execution of 13 months in prison which Hunter faces if he violates his probation.

Backstrom stated that around 9:00 p.m. on March 6, 2009, Ms. LeVasseur was crossing the intersection of Cedar and 153rd Street in Apple Valley when Hunter struck her. He then drove away and did not notify authorities. Police continued to investigate this incident based on witness descriptions. It wasn't until March 11th that the Apple Valley Police were told about Eric James Hunter. Minnesota law makes it a felony if someone involved in a motor vehicle accident resulting in personal injury or death (who does not cause the accident) flees the scene or fails to immediately contact the police. If someone who causes a motor vehicle accident resulting in death flees the scene, the crime of Criminal Vehicular Homicide is committed. However, based upon the accident reconstruction completed in this instance, the accident appears to have been caused by the victim crossing the street against a red light in the dark. Backstrom noted that pedestrians in Minnesota who cross a street at a signal-controlled intersection must obey the traffic signals.

Additional facts pertaining to this charge are contained in the criminal complaint which can be found at <http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/LawJustice/CriminalComplaint/Pages/default.aspx>.

In October of 2010 a Dakota County Jury heard testimony for approximately five days and deliberated for multiple days before Judge David Knutson declared a hung jury. The Defendant appealed the court's decision claiming the case could not be retried on double jeopardy grounds. The Court of Appeals concluded that the case could be retried. At his re-trial date of October 22, 2012, the Defendant pled guilty to one count of Leaving the Scene of an Accident Involving a Death (a felony).

Backstrom expressed his sympathy to the family and friends of Joan LeVasseur for their great loss. Backstrom praised Assistant County Attorney Kevin Golden who prosecuted the case. Backstrom thanked the Apple Valley Police Department and the Minnesota State Patrol for their thorough investigation in this matter.

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