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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Former Kasson Police Officer Julio Baez entered guilty pleas today. Baez pled guilty to a number of sexual assault charges, admitting to egregious conduct spanning more than 20 years, three victims and across three counties. Sentencing has been scheduled for April 3, 2019 at 10:30 am.

Baez was charged in Rice, Dodge and Olmsted counties with a number of criminal sexual assault allegations. All three complaints allege criminal sexual conduct against the same three victims over the course of many years in three different counties.  This conduct was disclosed within the past year and investigated by the Olmsted County Sheriff’s Office culminating in Baez being charged in Rice, Dodge, and Olmsted Counties. The state is represented by the Olmsted County Attorney’s Office on the Dodge and Olmsted County files and the Rice County Attorney’s Office on the Rice County file.

Olmsted County Attorney Mark Ostrem said, “Critical to reaching resolution was the involvement and understanding of the victims. It is unfathomable to appreciate the impact of Baez’s horrific conduct on each of their lives and we needed to ensure each victim’s voice was heard.” Rice County Attorney John Fossum commented “This resolution recognizes the harm to the victims and protects them from further involvement in the case. Baez will be out of the community for a long time.  We appreciate the cooperation and hard work of all the agencies involved in investigating and negotiating a strong resolution to this case.”

In the Rice County case, Baez pled guilty to 1st Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct; in the Dodge County case, Baez pled guilty to 2nd Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct; and in the Olmsted County case, Baez pled guilty to 1st Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct. The predatory conduct of Mr. Baez on each victim and in each community was accounted for in accomplishing resolution. Pursuant to the statutes and sentencing guidelines in place during the alleged conduct the parties agreed to recommend that Mr. Baez be sentenced to a prison term of 18 years. Upon release Mr. Baez will also be required to register as a predatory offender.