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NEWS RELEASE

**HASTINGS MAN SENTENCED FOR CRIMINAL VEHICULAR
HOMICIDE OF TWO WOMEN**

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom announced that **Joseph Paul Czek** (pronounced ‘Sek’), age 34 of Hastings, was sentenced today to a Stay of Execution of Sentence, 10 months in jail and up to 10 years of probation by Judge Arlene Perkkio in connection with a fatal crash that occurred on July 9, 2018, which took the lives of 67-year-old Karen Christiansen and 32-year-old Jena Christiansen, both of Shoreview. An 1,100 pound boulder fell off the back of the commercial truck Czek was driving and struck the vehicle driven by Karen Christiansen. The driver of the truck continued to drive away and did not return to the scene of the crash. Czek pled guilty December 5, 2019, to two counts of Criminal Vehicular Homicide (Causes Collision and Leaves the Scene). As part of his sentence, Czek was also ordered to pay restitution, participate in Restorative Conference if appropriate, and several other conditions. Czek was taken into custody today to begin his jail sentence.

On July 9, 2018, shortly before 5:00 p.m., the Rosemount Police Department responded to a crash at Rich Valley Boulevard and 125th Street in Rosemount. Responding officers determined that a Toyota Avalon had been hit by a boulder that became dislodged from a landscape truck. The driver and passenger in the Toyota suffered significant trauma and died at the scene. After extensive investigation, Rosemount Detectives were able to identify Czek Services as the company that owned the commercial vehicle involved in the crash. It was further determined that the Defendant, was the owner of the company and had been operating the vehicle near the time and location of the incident. Czek was arrested in Inver Grove Heights on July 11, 2018 and charged with four counts of Criminal Vehicular Homicide.

Additional facts pertaining to this case can be found in the criminal complaint at [Criminal Complaint Search](#). Prior news releases are available at [County Attorney News Releases](#). While in custody, a mug shot can be viewed at [Inmate Search](#).

Backstrom commented: *“We are pleased to have brought this man to justice for this easily preventable crime on our roads which tragically claimed two lives in our community.”* Backstrom extended his sympathies to the family and friends of Karen and Jena Christiansen.

Backstrom praised Assistant County Attorney Amy Schaffer who prosecuted the case. Backstrom thanked the Rosemount Police Department for their thorough investigation of this tragic crash. Backstrom also extended his appreciation to the Inver Grove Heights Police Department, the Inver Grove Heights Fire Department, the Minnesota State Patrol, and the Dakota County Sheriff’s Office for their assistance.

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