

OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY  
**JAMES C. BACKSTROM**  
COUNTY ATTORNEY



Dakota County Judicial Center  
1560 Highway 55  
Hastings, Minnesota 55033-2392  
Phillip D. Prokopowicz, Chief Deputy  
Jay R. Stassen, First Assistant  
Monica Jensen, Community Relations Director

Telephone  
(651) 438-4438  
FAX: (651) 438-4479 (Civil Division)  
FAX: (651) 438-4500 (Criminal Division)  
FAX: (651) 438-4499 (Admin Division)  
E-mail: attorney@co.dakota.mn.us

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**NEWS RELEASE**

**WOMAN ON CELL PHONE SENTENCED FOR TRAFFIC FATALITY AND INJURIES**

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom announced that **Lori Janine Hoefs**, age 57 of Oronoco, was sentenced today by Judge Jerome Abrams in connection with a fatal crash that occurred on October 22, 2016, which killed Brenda Travis, age 78 of Rochester, and caused serious injuries to three others. Hoefs pled guilty last November to one count each of Reckless Driving (Caused Death), Reckless Driving (Caused Great Bodily Harm), and two counts of Careless Driving (an amended criminal complaint). With regard to the Reckless Driving convictions, Hoefs was placed on probation for up to 2 years and sentenced to 180 days jail. In addition, Hoefs is to attend a driving improvement clinic, perform 30 hours of community work service where she is to talk about distracted driving, visit Brenda Travis' grave once each year of probation, and pay \$1,000 fine and \$80 surcharge. With regard to the Careless Driving convictions, Hoefs was sentenced to 90 days in jail, to be served concurrently.

Additional facts pertaining to this case can be found in the initial criminal complaint, which is located online at: <http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/LawJustice/CriminalComplaint/Pages/default.aspx>. The previous news release can be viewed at: <http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/LawJustice/AttorneyNewsReleases/Pages/default.aspx>.

Backstrom commented: "*Distracted driving occurs far too often and can easily result, as it did here, in death and injury.*" Backstrom expressed his sympathy to the family of Brenda Travis and wishes for the ongoing recovery of the other individuals injured in this crash.

Backstrom praised Assistant County Attorney Amy Schaffer who prosecuted the case. Backstrom thanked the Dakota County Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota State Patrol for their investigation into this matter.

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