



Brad D. Schimel
Wisconsin Attorney General

P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707-7857

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 31, 2017

Update: Jackson County Officer Involved Death Investigation

Black River Falls, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI), at the request of the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, has been investigating an officer involved death (OID) that took place during the early morning hours of October 28, 2017 after a Jackson County Sheriff's deputy responded to investigate a disorderly conduct and possible restraining order injunction violation. The responding officer intercepted the subject's vehicle and initiated a traffic stop but the vehicle refused to stop. The vehicle was driven to and stopped at a residence in the area. The subject displayed a firearm and the responding officer fired their service weapon at the subject.

An autopsy was conducted at University Hospital in Madison, Wis. The medical examiner confirmed a gunshot wound was the cause of death.

The deceased subject, Lucas J. DeFord, is 27 years old and resides in the Black River Falls area.

The involved officer, sheriff's deputy Justin Wathke, who has worked in law enforcement since 2009 at the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, has been placed on administrative assignment pending the outcome of this investigation.

Family of the decedent and victim witnesses have been provided victim witness services by the DOJ Office of Crime Victim Services.

The Wisconsin DOJ-led investigation of this incident has been a collaboration between DCI, the Wisconsin State Patrol, and the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory. The Jackson County Sheriff's Office has been fully cooperating with DCI during this investigation.

DCI is continuing to collect evidence and determine the facts of this incident and will turn over investigative reports to the Jackson County District Attorney's Office when the investigation concludes. DCI aims to turn over all OID investigative report to a prosecutor within 30 days of the incident.

No additional details are available at this time.