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**NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Blaine, Minnesota Remains Identified as Beth Johnson**

ALMA, Wis. – Following last week’s arrest and charging of Randall Q. Merrick of Rochester, Minnesota in relation to the disappearance of Beth Johnson, remains were found in Blaine, Minnesota and identified as Beth Johnson.

Randall Q. Merrick of Rochester Minnesota was charged with first degree intentional homicide, domestic abuse, and hiding a corpse. As in any criminal proceeding, Mr. Merrick is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

This investigation is led by the DOJ Division of Criminal Investigation. The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension led coordination of the arrest and drafting of the search warrant. The investigation is also led by the Buffalo County Sheriff’s Office, with assistance from the Olmsted County Sheriff’s Office, Southeast Minnesota Violent Crime Enforcement Team, Blaine Police Department, Anoka County Sheriff’s Office and Anoka Hennepin Narcotics and Violent Crime Task Force. The case is being prosecuted by the Buffalo County District Attorney’s Office with assistance from the DOJ Criminal Litigation Unit Assistant Attorney General Annie Jay. The Buffalo County District Attorney’s Office is providing victim services.

Wisconsin pre-trial ethics obligations prevent prosecutors from commenting or speculating beyond what is currently available in the filed criminal complaint, therefore we are not releasing any additional information.