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STATE OF NEBRASKA
Office of the Attorney General

2115 STATE CAPITOL BUILDING
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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 28, 2005, 11:50 a.m. CDT

CONTACT:
Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

Bruning Announces Guilty Verdict in Omaha Child Death Case

(Lincoln, Neb.) Attorney General Jon Bruning announced today that John D. Stevens, 33, of Omaha was found guilty of child abuse resulting in death by a jury in Douglas County District Court yesterday.

Stevens killed his girlfriend Patricia Oltmanns' 19-month-old daughter Faith Klabunde by shaking and/or hitting her head on a flat surface. She died three days later on Dec. 17, 2002, at Children's Hospital in Omaha. The child had been abused by Stevens for months prior to her death.

Bruning said, "Violence against children is one of the most heartbreaking crimes we must handle as prosecutors. There are no excuses or words that could ever justify the death of an innocent child."

Sentencing has been set for 9:30 a.m. CDT Friday, Sept. 9 in Douglas County District Court. Stevens faces 20 years to life in prison for the Class IB felony.

The case was handled by Assistant Attorneys General Steve Gabriel and Herb Spears.

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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 27, 2005, 2:30 p.m. CDT

CONTACT:
Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

Bruning Announces Settlement with Pfizer on Waste Violations

(Lincoln, Neb.) Attorney General Jon Bruning announced today that his office has reached an agreement with Pfizer to settle alleged violations of the state's hazardous waste regulations by the company's Lincoln plant.

The violations include the improper disposal of a small amount of merthiolate, a mercury-based animal vaccine preservative, which was immediately corrected and voluntarily reported to the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality in June 2003.

Bruning said, "I appreciate the steps Pfizer took to report and correct their error. This is clearly a company with a conscience."

Under terms of the settlement, Pfizer will pay \$75,000 in civil penalties to the state of Nebraska and an additional \$85,000 in funding to support several environmental projects. Those projects include environmental education programs at community centers and Boys and Girls Clubs and recreational trail improvements being developed by the Lincoln Parks & Recreation Department.

Rick Saffee, director of Lincoln Operations at Pfizer, said, "Pfizer takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously and is committed to 100 percent compliance with all environmental, health and safety requirements. We are pleased to know that the settlement reached with the state will ultimately benefit the community at large."

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ATTORNEY GENERAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 26, 2005, 9:30 a.m. CDT

CONTACT:
Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

Bruning Files Sexual Assault Charges Against Falls City Man

(Lincoln, Neb.) Attorney General Jon Bruning announced today that his office has filed first degree sexual assault charges against Matthew Koso, 22, of Falls City.

The charges stem from Koso's sexual relationship with a 14-year-old girl who is pregnant with his child. The sexual acts charged took place when the girl was 13. The pair was married in Hiawatha, Kan., in May. Kansas has a state law that allows children as young as 12 to marry with parental consent.

Bruning said, "This is a case of first degree sexual assault. I will not stand idly by while a grown man engages in a sexual relationship with a 13-year-old child. It is unacceptable."

First degree sexual assault is a Class II felony punishable by 1-50 years in prison.

A preliminary hearing has been set for 11:00 a.m. CDT Thursday, Aug. 17 in Richardson County Court.

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An audio clip featuring comments from the Attorney General will be available at www.ago.state.ne.us.



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Bruning said, "There is no doubt in my mind that this is a case of first degree sexual assault. I will not stand idly by while a grown man engages in a sexual relationship with a 13-year-old child. It is unacceptable."

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July 26, 2005, 9:30 a.m. CDT

CONTACT:
Regan Anson, Attorney General's Office, 402-471-2067
Marilyn Keelan, Crime Commission, 402-471-2194

Nebraska Crime Commission Reports 5 Percent Decrease in Crime for 2004

(Lincoln, Neb.) The Nebraska Crime Commission announced today that Nebraska has experienced a 5 percent decrease in the total number of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies from 2003 to 2004.

There were 65,823 crimes reported during 2004 compared to 69,344 in 2003. Those numbers, which serve as the basis for the Crime Index used to measure crime statewide, include the offenses of murder/manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

Attorney General Jon Bruning, chairman of the Crime Commission, said, "The good news is that we've seen an overall decrease in crime. The bad news is the number of violent crimes has increased. By and large we are moving in the right direction, but there is clearly more work to be done."

Nebraska Crime Commission Executive Director Michael Behm said, "The overall decrease in crime mirrors what is happening nationwide. The disheartening news is that violent crime in Nebraska increased while nationwide it decreased. All of the violent crime categories nationwide decreased. It is encouraging to continue to see a drop in property crimes."

In the violent crime category, Nebraska experienced a 5 percent increase with 5,302 violent crimes reported during 2004 compared to 5,032 reported in 2003. Murder/manslaughter decreased 25 percent from 55 to 41 offenses; forcible rape increased 21 percent from 495 to 597; robbery decreased 2 percent from 1,156 to 1,128; and aggravated assault increased 6 percent from 3,326 to 3,536.

Hate crimes in Nebraska increased from 27 in 2003 to 39 in 2004. Approximately 46 percent of those crimes were racially motivated.

(more)

2004 Crime Statistics Released, Page 2
July 26, 2005

The total number of arrests also increased from 93,475 in 2003 to 94,112 in 2004.

In terms of property crime, a 6 percent decrease occurred with 60,521 offenses reported in 2004 compared to 64,312 reported in 2003. Burglary decreased 4 percent from 9,881 to 9,534; larceny/theft decreased 5 percent from 47,962 to 45,456; motor vehicle theft decreased 14 percent from 6,070 to 5,206; and arson decreased 19 percent from 399 to 325.

The complete *2004 Preliminary Report* is attached and available on the Crime Commission's Web site at www.ncc.state.ne.us.

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Summary of Findings

There were 65,823 crimes reported during 2004 compared to 69,344 in 2003. Those numbers, which serve as the basis for the Crime Index used to measure crime statewide, include the offenses of murder/manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

In the violent crime category, Nebraska experienced a 5 percent increase with 5,302 violent crimes reported during 2004 compared to 5,032 reported in 2003. Murder/manslaughter decreased 25 percent from 55 to 41 offenses; forcible rape increased 21 percent from 495 to 597; robbery decreased 2 percent from 1,156 to 1,128; and aggravated assault increased 6 percent from 3,326 to 3,536.

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Crime in Omaha decreased 8 percent from 27,349 offenses reported in 2003 to 25,294 offenses in 2004. Lincoln experienced a 2 percent decrease from 14,610 to 14,384. Cities of 5,000 to 99,999 in population saw a 4 percent decrease from 17,352 to 16,641. Cities under 5,000 in population had a 10 percent decrease from 1,940 to 1,747. County areas reported a 5 percent decrease from 7,646 to 7,259. Crime occurring on state property increased 11 percent from 447 to 498.

The number of persons arrested in Nebraska during 2004 increased 1 percent from 93,475 arrests in 2003 to 94,112 in 2004, an increase of 637.

The top five categories in terms of number of arrests made during 2004 include: driving under the influence, 14,093 arrests; liquor law violations, 12,355 arrests; drug abuse violations, 10,809 arrests; simple assault, 9,217 arrests; and larceny/theft, 8,717 arrests.

Adult arrests involving persons age 18 and over increased 1 percent from 78,272 arrests in 2003 to 79,244 arrests in 2004. Adult arrests accounted for 84 percent of the total arrests made statewide. Significant increases were seen in driving under the influence, 13,286 to 13,746; drug abuse violations, 9,041 to 9,659; and larceny/theft, 5,180 to 5,673. Decreases were seen in liquor law violations, 10,560 to 10,178; disorderly conduct, 3,708 to 3,568; and fraud, 1,935 to 1,740.

Juvenile arrests decreased 2 percent, dropping from 15,204 in 2003 to 14,868 in 2004. Increases were seen in larceny/theft, 2,881 to 3,044; disorderly conduct, 820 to 881; and drug abuse violations, 1,112 to 1,150. Decreases were seen in liquor law violations, 2,556 to 2,177; and vandalism, 1,198 to 1,117.

Hate crime statistics were also released. During 2004 there were 39 incidents reported involving crimes motivated by hate. This is a 44 percent increase from the 27 incidents reported in 2003. Racial bias accounted for 46 percent of total hate crimes while ethnicity/national origin bias accounted for 26 percent. Religious bias accounted for 10 percent and sexual bias accounted for 18 percent. Of the hate crimes reported, 36 percent involved simple physical assault and 33 percent involved vandalism.

The complete *2004 Preliminary Report* is attached and available on the Crime Commission's Web site at www.ncc.state.ne.us.

CRIME IN NEBRASKA

PRELIMINARY 2004 REPORT - For Release July 27, 2005

5% DECREASE IN CRIME IN 2004

The number of crimes reported to Nebraska law enforcement agencies decreased 5 percent in 2004 compared to 2003. There were 65,823 crimes reported during January through December of 2004, compared to 69,344 reported during the same period of 2003, a decrease of 3,521 crimes. These numbers include only the crimes of Murder-Manslaughter, Forcible Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Larceny-Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft, and Arson which serve as the *Crime Index* used to measure crime statewide. Violent crimes (Murder-Manslaughter, Forcible Rape, Robbery, and Aggravated Assault) increased 5 percent. There were 5,302 violent crimes reported in 2004 compared to 5,032 reported in 2003, an increase of 270 crimes. Property crimes (Burglary, Larceny-Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft, and Arson) decreased 6 percent. There were 60,521 property crimes reported in 2004 compared to 64,312 reported in 2003, a decrease of 3,791 crimes.

Crime decreased 8 percent in Omaha and 2 percent in Lincoln. Cities of 5,000 to 99,999 population had a 4 percent decrease; cities under 5,000 population had a 10 percent decrease; and county areas reported a 5 percent decrease. Crimes occurring on State property increased 11 percent from 2003.

Crime Index Offenses, 2003 - 2004

<i>Crime Index Offenses</i>	<i>Number of Crime Index Offenses</i>		
	2003	2004	% Change
Violent Crimes	5,032	5,302	+5
Murder - Manslaughter	55	41	-25
Forcible Rape	495	597	+21
Robbery	1,156	1,128	-2
Aggravated Assault	3,326	3,536	+6
Property Crimes	64,312	60,521	-6
Burglary	9,881	9,534	-4
Larceny-Theft	47,962	45,456	-5
Motor Vehicle Theft	6,070	5,206	-14
Arson	399	325	-19
Total	69,344	65,823	-5

NEBRASKA COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

DAVE HEINEMAN
GOVERNOR

(402) 471-2194

MICHAEL E. BEHM
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A REVIEW OF HATE CRIMES IN NEBRASKA

With the passage of Legislative Bill 90 in 1997, commonly referred to as the Hate Crime Bill, the Crime Commission developed a system for reporting hate crimes. Law enforcement agencies voluntarily submit quarterly reports to the Commission on the number of hate crime incidents. If a hate crime has been committed, they report the type of crime committed, a general description of the location, and the type of bias motivation. Of the 170 law enforcement agencies asked to participate in hate crime reporting, 110 agencies submitted at least one quarterly report during 2004 with 86 of those agencies reporting all four quarters.

During 2004, there were a total of 39 incidents reported involving crimes motivated by hate. This is a 44% increase above the 27 reported in 2003. The types of bias motivation are provided below.

Type of Bias	Number	Percent
Racial	18	46.2
White	2	
Black	10	
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	
Multi-Racial	2	
Ethnicity / National Origin	10	25.6
Hispanic	5	
Other Ethnicity	5	
Religious	4	10.3
Jewish	2	
Anti-Islamic	2	
Sexual	7	17.9
Male Homosexual	4	
Female Homosexual	1	
Homosexual	2	
Total	39	100.0

The general location where the hate crimes occurred and the type of crime committed are provided below. The majority of incidents occurred at a residence or in a public area. The majority of hate crimes (44%) are carried out through a direct confrontation with the victim while 56% are directed towards the property of the victim.

**Percent Change - Crime Index Offenses
January thru December, 2003 - 2004 by Population Groups**

<i>Population Group</i>		<i>Murder, Man-slaughter</i>	<i>Forcible Rape</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Aggravated Assault</i>	<i>Burglary</i>	<i>Larceny Theft</i>	<i>Motor Vehicle Theft</i>	<i>Arson</i>	<i>Total</i>
250,000 & Over	2003	35	179	896	1,517	3,449	16,869	4,194	210	27,349
	2004	20	187	824	1,577	3,641	15,490	3,405	150	25,294
	% Change	-43	+4	-8	+4	+6	-8	-19	-29	-8
100,000 to 249,999	2003	5	94	153	862	1,959	11,049	479	9	14,610
	2004	6	128	192	905	1,895	10,814	424	20	14,384
	% Change	+20	+36%	+25	+5	-3	-2	-11	+122	-2
5,000 to 99,999	2003	7	140	75	503	2,297	13,433	806	91	17,352
	2004	7	167	79	523	2,142	12,862	758	103	16,641
	% Change	0	+19	+5	+4	-7	-4	-6	+13	-4
Under 5,000	2003	0	17	3	89	272	1,451	92	16	1,940
	2004	0	20	3	85	192	1,339	99	9	1,747
	% Change	0	+18	0	-4	-29	-8	+8	-44	-10
Counties	2003	8	63	29	343	1,795	4,838	497	73	7,646
	2004	8	91	27	444	1,553	4,580	514	42	7,259
	% Change	0	+44	-7	+29	-13	-5	+3	-42	-5
State Property	2003	0	2	0	12	109	322	2	0	447
	2004	0	4	3	2	111	371	6	1	498
	% Change	0	+100	--	-83	+2	+15	+200	--	+11
TOTAL	2003	55	495	1,156	3,326	9,881	47,962	6,070	399	69,344
	2004	41	597	1,128	3,536	9,534	45,456	5,206	325	65,823
	% Change	-25	+21	-2	+6	-4	-5	-14	-19	-5

TOTAL ARRESTS INCREASE 1%

The total number of persons arrested in Nebraska during 2004 increased from 93,475 in 2003 to 94,112 in 2004, an increase of 637 arrests. The top five categories in terms of the number of arrests made for specific crimes were: Driving under the Influence (14,093 arrests), Liquor Law Violations (12,355), Drug Abuse Violations (10,809), Simple Assault (9,217), and Larceny-Theft (8,717). The total number of adult arrests (age 18 and over) increased 1% from 78,272 in 2003 to 79,244 in 2004. Adult arrests accounted for 84% of the total arrests made statewide. The total number of juvenile arrests decreased 2%, from 15,204 in 2003 to 14,868 in 2004.

Total Arrest Trends, 2003 - 2004

<i>Offense</i>	<i>Under 18 Years of Age</i>			<i>18 Years of Age and Over</i>			<i>Total All Ages</i>		
	2003	2004	Percent Change	2003	2004	Percent Change	2003	2004	Percent Change
Murder - Manslaughter	4	4	0	52	32	-38	56	36	-36
Death by Negligence	2	3	+50	18	12	-33	20	15	-25
Forcible Rape	12	16	+33	145	177	+22	157	193	+23
Robbery	51	69	+35	228	248	+9	279	317	+14
Aggravated Assault	110	132	+20	761	897	+18	871	1,029	+18
Burglary	390	342	-12	630	663	+5	1,020	1,005	-1
Larceny-Theft	2,881	3,044	+6	5,280	5,673	+7	8,161	8,717	+7
Motor Vehicle Theft	165	140	-15	289	254	-12	454	394	-13
Arson	82	73	-11	34	39	+15	116	112	-3
Simple Assault	1,746	1,692	-3	7,545	7,525	0	9,291	9,217	-1
Forgery and Counterfeiting	37	34	-8	796	693	-13	833	727	-13
Fraud	68	67	-1	1,935	1,740	-10	2,003	1,807	-10
Embezzlement	7	4	-43	113	88	-22	120	92	-23
Stolen Property Offenses	187	169	-10	923	876	-5	1,110	1,045	-6
Vandalism	1,198	1,117	-7	1,781	1,652	-7	2,979	2,769	-7
Weapons Violations	157	181	+15	888	906	+2	1,045	1,087	+4
Prostitution/Commercial. Vice	7	3	-57	487	313	-36	494	316	-36
Sex Offenses	114	111	-3	521	504	-3	635	615	-3
Drug Abuse Violations	1,112	1,150	+3	9,041	9,659	+7	10,153	10,809	+6
Gambling	0	2	--	22	24	+9	22	26	+18
Offenses Ag. Family/Children	30	28	-7	1,485	1,639	+10	1,515	1,667	+10
Driving Under the Influence	376	347	-8	13,286	13,746	+3	13,662	14,093	+3
Liquor Law Violations	2,556	2,177	-15	10,560	10,178	-4	13,116	12,355	-6
Disorderly Conduct	820	881	+7	3,708	3,568	-4	4,528	4,449	-2
All Other Offenses	2,393	2,368	-1	17,744	18,138	+2	20,137	20,506	+2
Curfew / Loitering	444	391	-12				444	391	-12
Runaways	254	323	+27				254	323	+27
Total	15,204	14,868	-2	78,272	79,244	+1	93,475	94,112	+1

Location	Number	Percent
Commercial	6	15.4
Public Area (Street, Park, etc.)	13	33.3
Residence	12	30.8
School/College	5	12.8
Other	3	7.7
Total	39	100.0

Type of Crime	Number	Percent
Aggravated Assault	2	5.1
Simple Assault	14	35.9
Intimidation	9	23.1
Vandalism	13	33.3
Burglary	1	2.6
Total	39	100.0

PLEASE NOTE: Caution should be used when comparing the percent changes presented within this report. A slight shift in the volume of crimes or arrests may result in a large percent change for some offenses, arrests, and population groups. Final figures for 2004 will be published in the annual report "Crime in Nebraska - 2004."



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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

MEDIA ADVISORY
July 26, 2005, 7:15 a.m. CDT

CONTACT:
Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

**Bruning to Hold News Conference at
9:30 a.m. CDT TODAY**

Attorney General Jon Bruning and Nebraska Crime Commission Executive Director Mike Behm will hold a news conference to release the 2004 crime statistics at 9:30 a.m. CDT today, Tuesday, July 26 in Room 2115 at the State Capitol in Lincoln.

For a live audio feed dial 866-247-0709 and code 402-471-2682 at the prompt.

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July 25, 2005, 2:00 p.m. CDT

CONTACT:
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 21, 2005, 3:00 p.m. CDT

CONTACT:

Regan Anson, Attorney General's Office, 402-471-2067
Jon Jacobmeier, Pottawattamie County Attorney's Office, 712-328-5649

Attorney General Bruning and Pottawattamie County Attorney Matt Wilber Announce Arrest in Teresa Windham Murder

(Council Bluffs, Iowa) Attorney General Jon Bruning joined Pottawattamie County Attorney Matt Wilber today in announcing the indictment and arrest of Carlos Antonio Alonzo for the first-degree murder of 17-year-old Teresa Windham.

Windham was murdered in Council Bluffs in March 2001. Her body was found on April 9, 2001, in rural Dodge County, Neb., outside of Fremont.

The Attorney General's Office became involved in the "cold case" in June 2004 at the request of the Dodge County Sheriff's Department. Attorney General's Office investigators Bill Black and Charlie Venditte were instrumental in gathering evidence to re-open the case with the help of the Council Bluffs Police Department in October 2004.

Bruning said, "No one ever forgot Teresa Windham. The indictment and arrest in this case have been long-awaited by the law enforcement agencies that have worked so hard to solve her murder. It's a great example of what we can accomplish when we pool our resources and work together, regardless of geographic barriers. My heart goes out to Teresa's family during this difficult time."

Alonzo was arrested over the weekend in Aurora, Colo. The Pottawattamie County Attorney's Office is currently awaiting his extradition.

Pottawattamie County Chief Deputy County Attorney Jon Jacobmeier conducted the grand jury proceedings in late June 2005.

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An audio clip featuring comments from the Attorney General is now available at
www.ago.state.ne.us.

Printed with soy ink on recycled paper



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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 21, 2005, 1:00 p.m. CDT

CONTACTS:
Regan Anson, Attorney General's Office, 402-471-2067
Susan Seacrest, Groundwater Foundation, 402-434-2740

Bruning Presents \$15,000 to Groundwater Foundation

(Lincoln, Neb.) Attorney General Jon Bruning presented \$15,000 to the Groundwater Foundation today at an "H2O on the Go" event at Elliott Elementary School in Lincoln. The money was made available through the Attorney General's Environmental Protection Fund, a fund generated from voluntary payments collected in court-approved settlements from entities that have violated state and federal environmental regulations.

Bruning said, "I'm thrilled to lend the support of the Attorney General's Office to an organization like the Groundwater Foundation. When resolving environmental problems leads to creative environmental solutions such as youth education programs like 'H2O on the Go' we all win. Helping prevent environmental problems in the future and investing in the health and well-being of our children is an ideal way to use these funds."

Susan Seacrest, executive director of the Groundwater Foundation, said, "I want to thank Attorney General Bruning for his support of our efforts at the Groundwater Foundation and for recognizing the importance of programs like 'H2O on the Go.' This funding will help further the foundation's mission of educating Nebraska's children on the importance of maintaining a clean water supply."

"H2O on the Go" is a new youth program sponsored by the Groundwater Foundation with support from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, Rogers Foundation, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, ExxonMobil and Isco. The program provides groundwater education to children in Nebraska and helps students understand the importance of Nebraska's water and related natural resources. Specifically, it teaches them how they can protect our water supply through their own actions.

"H2O on the Go" is offered each Thursday afternoon through the YMCA Elliott Community Learning Center Summer Adventure Camp. Past session events have included tree planting, model aquifer building, environmental games and art projects. Activity curriculum was generated through the Groundwater Foundation and led by YMCA Community Learning Center Staff. When the program concludes on Sunday, August 28, the Foundation will have sponsored 30 "H2O on the Go" sessions.

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An audio clip featuring comments from the Attorney General is now available at www.ago.state.ne.us.



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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

MEDIA ADVISORY
July 21, 2005, 9:00 a.m. CDT

CONTACT:
Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****
Bruning to Participate in News
Conference at 3:00 p.m. CDT TODAY in
Pottawattamie County Iowa

Attorney General Jon Bruning will join Iowa Pottawattamie County Attorney Matt Wilber for **a news conference regarding a break in a cold case involving a murder dating back to 2001** at 3:00 p.m. CDT today, Thursday, July 21 at the Pottawattamie County Courthouse, 227 S. 6th St., in Council Bluffs.

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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

MEDIA ADVISORY
July 21, 2005, 8:40 a.m. CDT

CONTACT:
Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

**Bruning to Attend "H2O on the Go" Event
TODAY in Lincoln**

Attorney General Jon Bruning will attend an "H2O on the Go" event sponsored by the Groundwater Foundation at 1:00 p.m. CDT today, Thursday, July 21 at the Elliott Elementary School Gymnasium, 225 S. 25th St., in Lincoln. The Attorney General will make a special presentation to the Groundwater Foundation.

Bruning will also join Pfizer Executive Jack Coogan, also known as "Dr. Frank N Stein," and approximately 60 students enrolled in the YMCA Elliott Community Learning Center Summer Adventure Camp in activities involving magic and science experiments.

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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

MEDIA ADVISORY
July 20, 2005, 5:15 p.m. CDT

CONTACT:
Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

**Attorney General Bruning to Attend “H2O
on the Go” Event TOMORROW in Lincoln**

Attorney General Jon Bruning will attend an “H2O on the Go” event sponsored by the Groundwater Foundation at 1:00 p.m. CDT tomorrow, Thursday, July 21 at the Elliott Elementary School Gymnasium, 225 S. 25th St., in Lincoln. The Attorney General will make a special presentation to the Groundwater Foundation.

Bruning will also join Pfizer Executive Jack Coogan, also known as “Dr. Frank N Stein,” and approximately 60 students enrolled in the YMCA Elliott Community Learning Center Summer Adventure Camp in some activities involving magic and science experiments.

“H2O on the Go” provides experience-based groundwater education to children in Nebraska. The program helps students understand the importance of Nebraska’s water and related natural resources and how they can protect our water supply through their own actions.

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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

MEDIA ADVISORY
July 18, 2005, 4:50 p.m. CDT

CONTACT:
Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

**Attorney General Bruning to Attend “H2O
on the Go” Event THURSDAY in Lincoln**

Attorney General Jon Bruning will attend an “H2O on the Go” event sponsored by the Groundwater Foundation at 1:00 p.m. CDT Thursday, July 21 at the Elliott Elementary School Gymnasium, 225 S. 25th St., in Lincoln.

The Attorney General will make a special presentation and participate in activities with students enrolled in the YMCA Elliott Community Learning Center Summer Adventure Camp.

“H2O on the Go” provides experience-based groundwater education to children in Nebraska. The program helps students understand the importance of Nebraska’s water and related natural resources and how they can protect our water supply through their own actions.

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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General Jon Bruning
Guest Column: July 15, 2005
Contact: Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

Check Your Vulnerability with New Online Survey

The Nebraska Department of Justice recently unveiled a new weapon in the fight against consumer fraud, scams and identity theft. Our new online consumer vulnerability survey, which can be found at www.ago.state.ne.us, is designed to determine whether Nebraskans are at low, moderate or high risk for falling victim to various types of schemes.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of people who may not realize that something as simple as carrying your Social Security Card or ATM PIN in your wallet puts you at higher risk.

Consumers who click on the home page icon are asked a series of 10 yes or no questions and are immediately given a ranking of their vulnerability. They are also referred to a series of brochures available on the Web site that offer tips on how to guard against everything from identity theft to sweepstakes fraud.

The following tips can help you avoid becoming a victim:

- Keep your personal information private. Do not give out your Social Security number, driver's license number or account information to someone you don't know or over a cell phone, especially in places where the information can be overheard.
- If you shop online, purchase items only through secure Web sites from companies you trust. Always purchase online items with a credit card as you are protected by the federal Fair Credit Billing Act.
- Carry only the credit or debit cards you plan to use. That way if your purse or wallet is stolen or misplaced, you will have fewer accounts affected.
- Keep your Social Security card in a safe, secure location. Never carry it in your wallet or purse unless you have a specific reason for doing so.
- Shred all unwanted credit card offers or other documents that may contain personal information before throwing them away. Trash can be treasure for identity thieves.
- Don't be a victim of high-pressure sales tactics. Ask for information to be sent in the mail.
- Beware of sweepstakes, chain letters, foreign letters and other scams. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

For more tips on how to protect yourself, visit our Web site at www.ago.state.ne.us or contact our Consumer Protection Division at 800-727-6432.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 14, 2005, 11:50 a.m. CDT

CONTACT:
Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

Bruning Announces Guilty Verdict in Atlanta Grain Elevator Case

(Lincoln, Neb.) Attorney General Jon Bruning and Phelps County Attorney Tim Hoefft today announced that William White, former owner of Atlanta Grain Elevator in Atlanta, Neb., has been found guilty of eight counts of felony theft by Phelps County District Court Judge Terri S. Harder. White faces 1-20 years in prison and/or \$25,000 in fines for each of the Class III felonies.

Bruning said, "Fraud in any form tears at the fabric of our society. In Nebraska, we trust the companies in our communities enough to often do business on a handshake. That's what makes this case so devastating for the 50-plus farmers who were not only betrayed by someone they trusted, but also had their livelihood threatened by one man's greed."

Hoefft said, "Although the convictions won't make the victims whole financially, we hope they can find some consolation in the fact that the criminal justice system worked and that Mr. White will be held accountable for the thefts he perpetrated on each of the victims. In short, I really feel that justice has prevailed. My sincere thanks goes out to Assistant Attorney General George Love for all the countless hours he spent on this case. His assistance was greatly appreciated and essential in obtaining these convictions."

The Nebraska State Patrol began an investigation in March 2001 at the request of Hoefft who was concerned about possible criminal misconduct by White at the elevator, which is located in Atlanta, six miles southwest of Holdrege. At that time, search warrants were served on the elevator and the home of White, near Funk, Neb., by the State Patrol and the Phelps County Sheriff's Office. Three computers and numerous receipts, scale tickets and other paperwork detailing the daily operations of the elevator were seized.

The Attorney General's Office and the Phelps County Attorney's Office pursued charges against White after discovering he had unlawfully transferred the titles of farmers' grain (which was in open storage) to the Atlanta Grain Elevator and sold it to third parties.

(more)

Atlanta Grain Elevator Case, Page 2
July 14, 2005

White operated the elevator from 1998 until he voluntarily surrendered his Nebraska Public Service Commission's (PSC) license in March 2002 when federal and state audits at the elevator revealed a major shortage of grain and soybeans. Originally, the PSC received claims of more than \$4.5 million against the elevator.

The case was handled by Hoeft and Assistant Attorney General George Love. Sentencing has been set for 10:00 a.m. CDT Thursday, Aug. 18.

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An audio clip featuring comments from the Attorney General is now available at www.ago.state.ne.us.



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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 12, 2005, 3:45 p.m. CDT

CONTACT:
Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

Bruning Announces Sentence in Hancock Case

(Lincoln, Neb.) Attorney General Jon Bruning today announced that Jennifer Hancock of Winside has been sentenced to prison by District Court Judge Robert Burkhard.

Hancock, 29, plead no contest to one count of motor vehicle homicide, a Class IIIA felony, and one count of possession of methamphetamine, a Class IV felony, on June 2, 2005. She was sentenced today to 30 months to three years in prison on the motor vehicle homicide charge and 12 to 36 months in prison on the possession of methamphetamine charge. The sentences will be served concurrently.

Attorney General Jon Bruning said, "This case is a heart-wrenching illustration of the tragedies that occur when someone makes the decision to use meth. It's proof that this scourge not only destroys the lives of the people who use it, it also destroys the lives of innocent people in their path."

"I want to thank Dakota County Attorney Ed Matney for bringing this case to our attention. He was instrumental in helping us obtain this conviction."

The charges stemmed from an accident that occurred in April 2001 near Hubbard, Neb. Hancock was behind the wheel of a car that crossed the center line on Hwy 35 and collided with a car driven by 18-year-old Jeff Beacom. Beacom and Hancock's two children, 8 year-old Talia Hancock and 4-year-old Damien Wendt, were killed in the crash. Hancock had meth in her system at the time of the crash.

Criminal Bureau Chief Don Kleine handled the case. ###



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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2005, 11:00 a.m. CDT

CONTACT:

Regan Anson, Attorney General's Office, 402-471-2067
Aaron Sanderford, Governor's Office, 402-471-1967

State Applauds Supreme Court Decision in Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District Case

(Lincoln, Neb.) Attorney General Jon Bruning and Gov. Dave Heineman today applauded the Nebraska Supreme Court's decision in the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District Case.

The Court affirmed the state's position that the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources does not have authority to regulate groundwater use for the protection of surface water users. The Court also affirmed that the Natural Resource Districts (NRDs) were given the authority by the Nebraska Legislature to regulate ground water.

Attorney General Bruning said, "We are pleased that the Court recognized the importance of not altering current Nebraska law. The Supreme Court has sent a strong message to all water users of the importance of working together under LB 962 to develop solutions for integrated management of ground water and surface water."

Gov. Heineman said, "We need to focus our limited time and resources on finding solutions and not on lawyers and lawsuits. The Department of Natural Resources is committed to working with Natural Resource Districts in the affected areas."

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JON BRUNING
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General Jon Bruning
Guest Column: July 1, 2005
Contact: Regan Anson, 402-471-2067

There's No Quick Fix for Credit Problems

Every day consumers get into serious credit problems that can prevent them from buying a car, owning a home or even getting a job. And consumers are increasingly turning to companies that appear to offer a quick and easy way out of debt. These companies advertise online, in the newspaper, on cable channels and via weekly news fliers.

What many don't realize is they are signing up to be taken for a ride. In 2004, the director of the Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection observed that while "there are legitimate credit counseling services, the FTC has never seen a legitimate credit repair company."

Some of the warning signs of a credit repair scam are:

- You are asked to pay for services before they are provided. These fees are often disguised as "contributions."
- The "company" does not inform you of your legal rights. Under state and federal law, they must give you a copy of the *Consumer Credit File Rights* before you sign a contract.
- They do not inform you of what you can do yourself for free. You can dispute mistakes or outdated items on your report. If your dispute is successful, the credit reporting agency must remove it from your report and cannot use it again.
- They recommend that you NOT contact a credit reporting agency directly.
- They suggest you create a "new" credit report. They may advise you to apply for an employer ID number to use instead of your Social Security. This is fraud and you could be prosecuted.
- They tell you they can remove negative information from your report. The truth is that no one can legally remove accurate and timely credit information from your report.

Remember, you can work to repair your credit but it takes time. A legitimate credit counseling service will try to arrange a realistic repayment plan that is acceptable to you and your creditor. These services are available at little or no cost to the consumer.

For more information, contact our Consumer Protection Division at 800-727-6432, 402-471-2682 or visit us online at www.ago.state.ne.us. En Espanol, 402-471-3891 o llamada gratuita, 888-850-7555.