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Fergus Falls, Minnesota

Friday, January 20, 2006

Meder trial delayed until April

By Brandon Stahl

A trial scheduled to start next week for an Underwood man charged last February with two counts of criminal vehicular homicide was delayed until April.

Bruce Alan Meder, 46, is accused of killing Cory Allen Pierce, 22, of Alexandria while allegedly driving drunk.

Pierce was walking home from a party in Glenwood on Jan. 8, 2005, when he was hit. Meder admitted during a plea hearing in June he hit Pierce and drove away, but said he thought at the time of the accident he hit a deer. He denied he had been drinking that night.

Meder did not take a blood alcohol test that night because he was not identified as a suspect until the next day. However, based on witnesses who said they saw Meder drinking at a bar and smelled alcohol on his breath, police charged him with a homicide. Others reported a car matching Meder's description was driving erratically.

Blood samples taken from Meder's car matched Pierce's blood, according to the court charge.

Meder's trial was delayed because his attorney, Kent Marshall of Barrett, is involved in a federal trial that may last until March, his office said.

Pope County Assistant Attorney Chad Larson said the delay in the trial shouldn't affect his case. However, Larson was dealt a setback in August when a judge ruled



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that Meder's four prior DWI's wouldn't be admissible in a trial because it could prejudice a jury.

"The defendant can open the door," Larson said. "There are circumstances where if that happened, we could bring the evidence in."

Larson said Meder is free on \$10,000 bond, but is required to be on electronic home monitoring, cannot drink alcohol must submit to random alcohol testing and cannot drive.

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