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News Release

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Winnebago County Sheriff's Deputies Recover Stolen Firearm Following Foot Pursuit

On Thursday, July 9th, members of the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department assigned to the Regional Crime Deterrent Unit (RCDU) conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle near the intersection of School Street and Central Avenue in Rockford. During the course of the traffic stop, the occupants were asked to exit the vehicle. As they exited the vehicle, one subject, later identified as Martese R. Ferguson, began to run from deputies. During the foot pursuit, Ferguson discarded a loaded, Springfield Armory 9mm handgun before being taken into custody. The handgun was found to be a stolen firearm from Oak Park, Illinois.

While taking Ferguson into custody, deputies received minor injuries. Ferguson also received minor injuries and was transported to a local hospital for treatment. Once released, he was transported to the Winnebago County Jail and lodged.

"Public safety will always be my highest priority. Our deputies are committed to aggressively pursuing criminals, removing illegal firearms from our streets, and protecting the families of Winnebago County. Recovering a stolen firearm and taking another armed offender into custody demonstrates the dedication, professionalism, and courage our deputies display every day. We will continue working around the clock to keep our community safe," said Sheriff Gary Caruana.

The Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office reviewed the facts of the case and authorized the following charges:

Martese R. Ferguson (age 22) of Rockford, IL.

Aggravated Unlawful Possession of a Weapon (Previous Conviction)-Class 2 Felony
Unlawful Possession of a Weapon by a Street Gang Member-Class 2 Felony
Possession of a Stolen Firearm-Class 2 Felony
Possession of Firearm without Requisite Firearm Owner's ID Card-Class 3 Felony
Unlawful Use of Weapons-Class 3 Felony
2 counts of Resisting a Peace Officer (Injury)-Class 4 Felony

The charges against Martese R. Ferguson are merely accusations and he is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.