

Superior man faces homicide charge in overdose death

By Maria Lockwood
Superior Telegram

SUPERIOR — A Superior man who allegedly supplied a fatal dose of fentanyl to a neighbor made his initial appearance in Douglas County Circuit Court on Monday.

Nicholas Rashad Combs, 33, faces one count of first-degree reckless homicide. A cash bond of \$20,000 was set for Combs, who remained in custody at the Douglas County Jail on Wednesday.

Superior police responded to a possible drug overdose at 4:44 a.m. June 1 at an apartment building in the city's South End neighborhood, according to the criminal complaint. Medical personnel confirmed the victim was dead. A forensic pathologist identified the cause of death as acute fentanyl intoxication.

A witness provided the police with screenshots of conversations on the

victim's phone between the victim and "Nicholas." They reportedly included a message from the victim to Nicholas asking if he still had "those blues" late May 31 and another early June 1 in which the victim told Nicholas he was walking to the store to "get yo money." Nicholas responded with "I'm home."

Detective Russ Milroy initiated a search warrant for Facebook messenger data for Combs and the victim. He reportedly found numerous messages between Combs and others, including the victim, in which the Superior man was arranging sales of "blues." On May 30, a message from the victim lets Combs know he wants four pills tomorrow night, and Combs says he has them for him, the criminal complaint said.

After reviewing the victim's Facebook messages, Milroy found no indication that the victim had sought drugs from any other sources, according to the criminal complaint.

Another tenant of the building told Detective Griff Coffman that Combs had recently sold her two blue pills which made her sick. She had taken one, but still had the second and turned it over to Coffman. An analysis of the pill by the Wisconsin Crime Lab indicated the presence of fentanyl, the criminal complaint said.

Video surveillance footage from a nearby Kwik Trip showed the victim withdrawing money from an ATM at 1 a.m. June 1, according to the complaint.

Combs denied supplying the victim and the other tenant with drugs. His next court appearance was set for Wednesday, July 20. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 40 years of imprisonment and a fine of up to \$100,000.

Combs has also been charged with delivering schedule I or II narcotics and misdemeanor bail jumping in a separate case that is connected to the same incident. His next appearance in that case is set for Monday, July 18.

Carlton County Board approves cervid farm moratorium

By Dylan Sherman and Jake Przytarski
Cloquet Pine Journal

CARLTON — A one-year moratorium on the creation and expansion of any new or existing cervid farms in Carlton County was approved unanimously by the board of commissioners during a meeting Tuesday.

The issue came to the board's attention on May 3, when Capt. Robert Gorecki, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources enforcement division regional manager in northeastern Minnesota, explained chronic wasting disease and how there is no cure for cervids that are affected by it.

The moratorium will prevent new deer or elk

farms from being established in the county for a year as the effects of the disease are studied.

According to Greg Bernu, Carlton County land commissioner, there is only one cervid farm in the county.

The vote comes after the county held a public hearing and heard from interested parties on the issue June 27.

Those in favor of a moratorium hoped it could be used as a proactive way to protect wild deer in the county and get a handle on the disease.

Arguments against the moratorium referenced the low case numbers in the state and that a majority of the cases have been found in wild deer.

According to the Minnesota DNR, since 2002 there have been 153 positive cases found after testing 106,000 deer, with a majority of the cases occurring in the southeast region of the state.

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