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MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: March 24, 2020	CONTACT: Bridget Coit
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SUBJECT: 20PD05320 vehicle in the river	@EauClairePD @EauClairePD @EauClairePD

On March 20, 2020, at 2:54 am, the Eau Claire Communications Center received information about a vehicle that had entered the Chippewa River. The Eau Claire Police Department responded with the Eau Claire Fire Department.

A witness had observed a vehicle travel westbound on Gilbert Avenue and enter the Chippewa River. Officers located debris from a vehicle along the shoreline. This debris included a license plate. The Eau Claire Fire Department located a vehicle in the Chippewa River utilizing their sonar equipment. Since that time, they worked to recover the vehicle from the water.

Today the search efforts continued. The search efforts were coordinated by the Eau Claire Fire Department and Eau Claire Police Department. Bruce's Legacy (a volunteer organization) also provided assistance. This afternoon, the vehicle was recovered from the Chippewa River.

Our investigation into this incident has shown the vehicle traveled at a high rate of speed westbound on Gilbert Avenue and did not brake before making entry into the water. The vehicle was occupied by Chloe T Zielke DOB 2/9/1999, a resident of Eau Claire and a student at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

At this time, there are no suspects thought to be involved with Zielke's vehicle entering the water, and no criminal acts are believed to be associated. Zielke has been located and an autopsy will be performed at Sacred Heart Hospital.

The Eau Claire Police Department is working with Zielke's family and our thoughts go out to them. We would like to thank community members for their patience while we investigated this matter.

We would also like to thank the following agencies for their assistance with this incident: the Eau Claire Fire Department, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Police Department, the Eau Claire County Medical Examiners Office, Bruce's Legacy, Xcel Energy, and A to Z Towing.

Media inquiries can be directed to:
Bridget Coit
Public Information Officer