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Madison County, Illinois
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**Pocahontas man receives 6-year prison sentence for
wrong-way DUI crash that resulted in serious injuries**

Edwardsville, IL — Madison County State's Attorney Tom Haine announced Monday that a Pocahontas man has been sentenced to six years in prison in connection with a DUI-related crash that caused serious injuries.

Kyle T. Heimsath, 36, received the sentence Monday in Circuit Court in Madison County. He pleaded guilty in February to a charge of Aggravated DUI.

Heimsath's blood-alcohol level was determined to be 0.249 percent when he caused the crash at 5:17 a.m. on Nov. 30, 2019, on Interstate 70. His vehicle, which had been going the wrong way on the interstate, collided with a minivan occupied by an Indiana family that was returning from a holiday trip to visit relatives in Missouri.

At a sentencing hearing Monday, Assistant State's Attorney Gina McNabney asked the Court to impose a nine-year sentence, while Heimsath asked for a sentence of probation.

McNabney, in her argument, said police began receiving 911 calls about 5 a.m. regarding a wrong-way driver on the interstate. The defendant's vehicle was stopped in the wrong lanes, with its lights off, when the crash happened.

"The defendant committed an egregious act of driving under the influence that had serious, life-altering effects on a family of four that were just passing through on the interstate," McNabney argued.

Members of the Indiana family gave victim-impact statements at the sentencing hearing, describing multiple surgeries they've undergone for various injuries, including broken bones. One family member, a teen who feared he would die, suffered a torn intestine. He described the pain he endured, and having to learn to walk again. The family members also spoke of their ongoing mental and emotional suffering.

"Drinking too much and then driving is not only a risk to your life, but a risk to everyone on the road," Haine said. "It is also a crime. I commend the prosecution team on this case and hope this prison sentence will help send that message. Even a first DUI — as this was for the defendant — can put innocent lives at incredible risk and cause life-altering injuries."

He added: "We are just thankful no one died here. I commend the family members for having the strength and courage to come to court and describe the impact that the defendant's reckless actions have had on their lives. We pray for their continued healing."