

Barnes pleads no contest to misdemeanor motor vehicle homicide

Written by Wauneta Breeze
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By Sheri Hink

The Wauneta Breeze

Cody Barnes of Elwood pled no contest to motor vehicle homicide in the fatal accident involving Cody Fanning of Wauneta. Fanning died after falling from the back of Barnes' pickup near their college in Crete April 25.

Barnes was charged with manslaughter at his May 15 arraignment. The original charge was a class three felony that carried a possible sentence of one to 20 years imprisonment and/or up to a \$25,000 fine.

The new charge, a class one misdemeanor, carries a potential penalty of up to one year in prison and/or a \$1,000 fine.

Saline County Attorney Tad Eickman said officials looked at all the evidence of the accident.

"Barnes took some proactive action to ask Fanning to sit down, which was taken into consideration when considering the plea bargain," explained Eickman.

Investigators discovered at one point Barnes had stopped the pickup, gotten out and told three passengers in the pickup bed, including Fanning, to sit down as they drove back to Crete.

Fanning stood up again after Barnes had asked them to sit down and eventually fell from the

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back of the pickup as it turned a corner in Crete.

Sentencing is scheduled for Sept. 18.