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Claim Filed Over Rape Accusations

BEATRICE, Neb. (AP) - A southeast Nebraska man who was accused of rape by a woman who later was charged with perjury has filed a \$500,000 claim against Gage County.

Beatrice radio station KWBE reports that Elliott Hawkins' claim has been referred to the county's insurance

carrier. If the claim is denied or no action is taken within six months, Hawkins could file a lawsuit.

Three felony charges had been filed against Hawkins, of Wymore, including one for sex assault. They were dropped after authorities concluded that 27-year-old Jennifer Valenta, of Wilber, had lied about being attacked by Hawkins and others at Big Indian Recreation Area last November.

In addition to the perjury charge, Valenta is accused of tampering with evidence and other violations. She's pleaded not guilty.

Associated Press