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**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Birgit Fladager, Chief

Date: February 27, 2006

Deputy D.A./Public Information Officer

Re: Ernest Barela Denial of Parole

Phone: (209) 525-5550

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County Assistant District Attorney Carol Shipley announced today that Ernest Barela, age 51, of Fresno, was found unsuitable for parole at a hearing of the State Board of Prison Terms at Deuel Vocational Institute in Tracy. Deputy District Attorney (DDA) Thomas Brennan appeared at the hearing and argued for continued confinement based on the cruel and callous nature of the crimes and the emotional trauma inflicted on the victims which they suffer to the present day. DDA Brennan also argued that Barela is “institutionalized” and therefore cannot function as a law-abiding citizen in the community. He argued that Barela entered the criminal justice system at the age of 12 and has not proven himself capable of living a crime-free life. Barela served time in the California Youth Authority closely followed by two separate terms in State Prison. Barela was on parole for less than three months when he committed the offenses for which he is serving a life sentence. DDA Brennan argued that Barela has proven himself incapable of living crime-free outside of a tightly structured prison environment and is therefore a direct threat to the safety of Stanislaus County and Fresno County residents. The Board of Prison Terms agreed and denied parole for one year.

On September 18, 1978, Barela produced a loaded shotgun and kidnapped a mother and her two children, ages 6 and 8, forcing the victim to drive him from Riverbank to Turlock. During the drive, Barela robbed the victim of her money and sexually assaulted her in the presence of her two children who were in the back seat of the vehicle.

Barela received a sentence of 7 years to life in prison. He first became eligible for parole in 1985 and has been denied parole on multiple prior occasions. Barela will have another chance to convince the parole board to release him in one year. The Stanislaus County District Attorney’s Office will once again appear and oppose his release.