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**PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

**For More Information Contact:**

Date: April 3, 2009

Re: People v. Norris Poulsen, Guilty on  
13 Counts of Grand Theft

Carol Shipley, Assistant District Attorney

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Norris Poulsen, age 60, of Pleasanton, was convicted of 13 counts of grand theft. This case was initiated by the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) which was notified on September 11, 2007 that Poulsen, the licensed auto dealer who owned Newman Auto Plaza in Newman, California, where he had sold used cars since 2001, had abandoned his dealership. DMV Investigator Sylvia Thomas went to the dealership and spoke with Poulsen's son and sister, both of whom said they had no idea where Poulsen was. A subsequent examination of the dealership records and follow-up investigation by Investigator Thomas of several written complaints filed with the DMV by customers of Newman Auto Plaza, produced evidence to show that Poulsen received many vehicles by consignment or trade-in, sold the vehicles, then never paid off the outstanding loans on the vehicles. In some cases, buyers of vehicles who had paid Poulsen in full, had the vehicles re-possessed because of his failure to pay off the original loan. Poulsen also received several vehicles from wholesalers, sold the vehicles, then never paid the wholesalers. In all of these cases, the new buyers of vehicles were unable to register their vehicles because title was still held by the original lender or by the wholesaler. Over 30 individuals and several lenders were victims of Poulsen's fraud.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable John Whiteside sentenced Poulsen to 10 years in prison but suspended execution of that sentence for a period of five years. For the next five years, Poulsen will be on formal probation. Terms of his probation include: Poulsen was ordered to pay the stipulated sum of \$590,530 in restitution, serve 365 days in jail, stay away from all of the victims named in the 39-count complaint, pay a state restitution fund fine of \$2,000, and submit his person, vehicle and residence to search at any time of the day or night by any law enforcement officer for stolen property.