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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Carol Shipley

Date: January 12, 2011

Assistant District Attorney

Re: Rusty Russel Flowers
Auto Thief Gets
16 Months Prison

Phone: (209) 525-5550

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Rusty Russel Flowers, age 22, of Ceres, was convicted on January 12, 2011 of auto theft. Flowers was already in the Proposition 36 drug treatment program stemming from a possession of methamphetamine conviction from January 2008. Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey W. Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

On November 2, 2010 at about 10:30 a.m. in the area of Hahn Drive and Braden Avenue in Modesto, an officer from the Stanislaus County Auto-Theft Task Force (StanCATT) observed Flowers and his friend looking into windows of parked vehicles in an apartment complex. There had been several incidents of vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts in the immediate area so officers were on pro-active patrol looking for suspicious activity. After Flowers and his friend saw the officer observing them, Flowers and his friend jumped into a 1992 blue Acura Vigor. Flowers was a passenger while his friend drove. The officer then activated his lights and siren to perform a traffic stop, but Flowers's friend drove through several stop signs and traffic signals in an attempt to evade the pursuing officer. Finally, Flowers's friend stopped the vehicle in the driveway of the Walnut Grove Senior Retirement Center and they both ran, but were caught a short distance away. When the officer contacted the registered owner of the vehicle, he indicated that he and his wife had just parked the vehicle in their driveway in Manteca within the last hour and did not realize someone had stolen it.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Timothy Salter sentenced Flowers to sixteen months in state prison. Flowers's friend who drove the stolen vehicle and evaded the pursuing officer was previously sentenced to four years in prison.

Stanislaus County residents can report suspected vehicle theft activity to their local law enforcement agency or contact the Stanislaus County Auto-Theft Task Force (StanCATT) at: (209) 545-7316.

IF YOU OBSERVE A THEFT IN PROGRESS, DIAL 911

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