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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Carol Shipley

Date: February 7, 2011

Assistant District Attorney

Re: Jason Thomas Underwood

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Auto Thief Gets 5 Years Prison

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Jason Thomas Underwood, age 35, of Madera, was convicted on February 7, 2011 of auto theft. Underwood also admitted a prior auto theft conviction from September 2001 and a robbery conviction from October 2005, which is a “strike” under California’s Three Strikes Law, for which he served a term in state prison and is currently on parole. Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey W. Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

On November 23, 2010 at approximately 4:00 p.m. in the area of College Avenue and Coldwell Avenue in Modesto, an officer from the Stanislaus County Auto-Theft Task Force (StanCATT) observed Underwood parking a 1991 black Toyota pick-up truck next to a pay phone. A check on the license plate indicated that the truck was reported stolen on November 22, 2010 out of the owner’s driveway on Manor Oak Drive in Modesto after the owner parked the vehicle for the night without locking the doors. After getting out of the truck, Underwood saw the officer observing him. Underwood ran but was caught a short distance away. Underwood stated that a friend loaned him the truck earlier that morning so that he could drive back to Madera, but he had no contact information for that friend.

The Honorable John Whiteside sentenced Underwood to five years in state prison.

The District Attorney’s Office urges all citizens to lock their unattended vehicles even when parked on their driveway.

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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