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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: December 19, 2014
Re: Charles Neeley—Granted Parole

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Charles Neeley, age 46, of Modesto, was found suitable for parole at a December 16th, 2014 hearing of the State Board of Parole Hearings conducted at the Avenal State Prison. Deputy District Attorney Sandra Bishop appeared at the hearing and argued for continued confinement based on the cruel and callous nature of the offense and Neeley's lack of remorse for his actions, his escalating violence as demonstrated by crimes he committed prior to the murder, the prison psychiatric assessment that Neeley presented a moderate risk for future violence and Neeley's lack of insight into his crime.

Neeley was convicted by jury of second degree murder in April 1996 for the 1995 killing of eighteen-year-old Aaron Schipper. Neeley shot the unarmed victim during a dispute over a stolen stereo. Neeley was sentenced to 19 years to life in prison.

The Board of Parole Hearings Commissioner described the crime as callous and recognized Neeley's escalating pattern of violence prior to the life crime, and opined that while some circumstances suggested a risk with paroling Neeley, he did not pose an unreasonable risk to public safety if released.

In reaching its decision, the Board found that in the nineteen years since the murder occurred Neeley had accepted responsibility for the offense and exhibited remorse. The Board also considered Neeley's record in prison, including his acquisition of marketable skills while incarcerated, and his participation in numerous prison rehabilitation, self-help and volunteer programs. The hearing panel imposed conditions on Neeley's parole that he not drink, that he submit to testing for controlled substances, that he have no contact with the victim's next of kin and that he parole to transitional housing in Los Angeles.

Neeley's grant of parole now goes to the Governor's office for review.

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