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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: March 18, 2005

Re: Workers' Compensation Fraud

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MODESTO, CALIFORNIA – Stanislaus County District Attorney James Brazelton announced today that on March 9, 2005, Uriel Valencia, age 44, of Winton, pled no contest to one count of felony Insurance Fraud, a violation of Insurance Code Section 1871.4(a)(1). On Friday March 4, 2005, Claudette Bland, age 34, of Modesto, also pled no contest to a felony charge of insurance fraud. The cases were investigated and prosecuted by the District Attorney's Insurance Fraud Unit.

Mr. Valencia's cases arose out of events which occurred between April 2003-April 2004. During this period, Mr. Valencia was employed as a sweeper operator by the Sensient Dehydrated Flavors Company in Turlock when he injured his back and neck while on the job. As a result of this claimed injury, Mr. Valencia was placed on total temporary disability for several months and eventually returned to work with certain restrictions (one of which was that he work no more than four hours per day due to his complaints of pain). As part of this compensation package, Mr. Valencia was also paid the equivalent of four hours pay per day from workers compensation insurance. However, company officials eventually suspected that Mr. Valencia was malingering. As a result, undercover surveillance videos were taken of Mr. Valencia and his activities throughout the day.

The videos showed Mr. Valencia working as an apartment manager in Madera, California climbing into a garbage dumpster, lifting heavy items, and loading and unloading heavy boxes of tile from his truck.

Mr. Valencia was sentenced to 60 days in jail, three years felony probation and restitution for an amount still to be determined.

Ms. Bland, a former Stanislaus County employee, suffered knee and wrist injuries while on the job in 2000. Due to these injuries, Ms. Bland was placed on total temporary disability - as well as being limited to only 4 hours of work per day. However, unknown to either her employer or her treating physicians, Ms. Bland was attending Adrian's Beauty College as a full time trainee - in the course of which she regularly performed activities which she had claimed she was unable to perform at her workplace because of injuries and associated pain. Ms. Bland was sentenced to serve 30 days in jail, 240 hours of community service and three years felony probation. Ms. Bland also agreed to pay \$2,000.00 in restitution.