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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: April 10, 2006

Re: Michael Wells conviction

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Modesto, California – Stanislaus County Assistant District Attorney Carol Shipley announced that Michael Wells, 43, of Modesto, was convicted on April 5 after a jury trial of evading the police with willful and wanton disregard for safety and driving on a suspended license. A jury also found true six prior convictions of residential burglary. Mr. Wells admitted prior convictions of theft, and assault with force likely to cause great bodily injury. Deputy District Attorney John R. Mayne prosecuted the case.

The case arose out of events which occurred in the late night of November 21, 2006 and early morning of November 22, 2006. California Highway Patrol Officer Colby Hemm tried to stop Wells, who was stopped at a green light on Carpenter Road. Officer Hemm testified that after a short chase through Modesto where Wells ran stop signs and a red light, and reached speeds of 60 miles per hour, Hemm's patrol car's siren gave out just before Wells began driving the wrong way on H Street. The pursuit was briefly abandoned.

Wells was seen a few minutes later by CHP Officer Steve True northbound on Highway 99. True and other officers from the Modesto and Stockton CHP offices chased Wells up Highway 99 at speeds of up to 110 miles per hour, then pursued him on Jack Tone Road and Farmington Road in San Joaquin County until Wells' car stopped. Wells ran from the car, was pepper sprayed, and arrested by officers. Defendant Wells testified that he stopped the car because he ran out of gas. He testified that he was "very careful" during the chase, but admitted speeding and running stop signs.

Defendant's sentencing date is scheduled for May 11, 2006. He faces up to 30 years to life under California's Three Strikes law.

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