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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: October 29, 2008
Re: Pablo Astorga-Conviction of
Possession of Heroin in Honor Farm

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Pablo Astorga, age 47, of Modesto was convicted after a jury trial on October 29th of Possession of Heroin in the Honor Farm and subsequently admitted a prior felony conviction that falls under California's "Three Strikes Law".

The case arose out of events which occurred on June 19, 2008 while the defendant was in custody at the Stanislaus County Honor Farm serving a sentence for failing to complete his court-ordered drug rehabilitation program pursuant to Proposition 36.

At approximately 1:11 a.m., Deputy Alex Leon found Astorga standing near a sink in one of the barracks. Deputy Leon saw an empty red balloon, a bindle of tobacco, and a bindle containing a black tarry item that weighed .23 grams and containing heroin lying next to Astorga's feet. Deputy District Attorney Robert J. Taro prosecuted the case for the People.

The Honorable John Whiteside presided over the case and set sentencing for December 10, 2008. Judge Whiteside also found the defendant to be in violation of his grant of probation and set that case for hearing on the same date. Astorga was on probation and serving a sentence for a previous conviction of possession of heroin. Astorga faces a maximum sentence of eight years in state prison.

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