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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Carol Shipley

Date: September 22, 2009

Assistant District Attorney

Re: Shea Michael Hughes

Phone: (209) 525-5550

Auto Thief Sentenced to 5 Years in Prison

**Modesto, California** – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Shea Michael Hughes, age 29, of Turlock, was convicted of auto theft, evading a peace officer, and possession of stolen property. The defendant also admitted serving two prior prison terms: one for possession of stolen property from April 2003, and another for possession of stolen property from September 2006 for which he was currently on parole. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

The case arose out of events that occurred on September 8, 2009 at around 6 a.m. in the area of N. Olive Avenue in Turlock. Officers of the Stanislaus County Auto-Theft Task Force (STANCATT) observed Hughes wearing a dark blue zip-up hooded sweatshirt with the hood pulled over his head, black shorts, and black shoes peering into several parked vehicles and testing the doors to check if they were locked. Officers then observed Hughes driving a 1998 black Jeep Cherokee that had been reported stolen on September 3, 2009 in Turlock. When officers tried to perform an enforcement stop, Hughes accelerated away. Hughes was traveling approximately 55 m.p.h. in a 25 m.p.h. residential zone. Hughes then failed to stop at the solid red lights at the intersections of N. Olive, Hawkeye Avenue and Geer Road. Hughes finally was apprehended when he drove down a dead end street. Hughes claimed a friend loaned him the vehicle but that he had no contact information for this friend.

Inside the vehicle, officers located DVD movies, a GPS device, sunglasses, and CDs. Officers then turned on the GPS device and obtained the home address programmed into it. When officers contacted the homeowner at that address, the homeowner checked his vehicle which had been parked in his driveway and noticed that it had been recently burglarized. The homeowner indicated that the GPS device had been inside his unlocked vehicle.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Thomas Zeff sentenced Hughes to five years in state prison.

The District Attorney's Office urges citizens to keep their vehicles locked while unattended and to store any valuables out of sight since most auto burglaries are crimes of opportunity.

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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