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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Carol Shipley

Date: August 12, 2009

Assistant District Attorney

Re: Donovan Saldana

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Gang Member/Auto Thief-Sentenced to
6 Years in Prison

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Donovan Saldana, age 21, of Ceres, was convicted of auto theft, participating in a criminal street gang, and being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. Saldana was on felony probation for auto theft and possession of methamphetamine stemming from an August 2008 conviction. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

The current cases arose out of events that occurred on three dates. On April 24, 2009 at approximately 10 a.m. near the 1800 block of Central Avenue in Ceres, a police officer performed a routine traffic stop after observing Saldana driving a 1999 black Ford Ranger pick-up truck with a cracked windshield and expired registration. After Saldana pulled over, the officer was advised that Saldana was on probation. A probation search of Saldana's vehicle revealed a box of Federal 12-gauge shotgun shells on the floorboard behind the passenger seat. Convicted felons are not allowed to possess firearms or ammunition. After Saldana was arrested, he was able to post bail.

On June 5, 2009 at approximately 8:30 p.m., an officer responded to a report of a person who fired shots in the area of the 900 block of Hackett Road in Ceres. The officer located Saldana who matched the description that was given. A search of the area revealed a loaded Ruger .22 caliber silver revolver with two spent rounds. Saldana once again posted bail and was released from custody.

On June 23, 2009 at approximately 1:30 a.m. in the area of Whitmore Avenue and Geer Road in Hughson, Saldana was a passenger in a 1991 black Acura Integra that had been reported stolen out of Ceres less than one hour earlier. After a Sheriff's deputy pulled the vehicle over, the driver ran away and was never caught. Saldana got out of the front passenger side of the vehicle. Saldana claimed the driver picked him up in the vehicle and that he didn't know the vehicle was stolen. The deputy also observed that Saldana had a tattoo of "SST" on the back of his shaved head. "SST" stands for "South Side Trece," which is part of the Sureno criminal street gang. Saldana also had tattoos of a black dot on each of his three middle fingers of his left hand, and a

“SS” on his chest (which stands for “South Side”). A search incident to arrest revealed two screwdrivers and a knife in Saldana’s pocket.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Nancy Ashley sentenced Saldana to six years in state prison.

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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