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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: August 16, 2011

Re: Nathan Rios

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Auto Thief Gets
3 Years Prison

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Nathan Rios, age 48, of Modesto, was convicted on July 25, 2011 of possession of a stolen vehicle, evading a peace officer, assaulting a police dog, driving under the influence, and resisting arrest. Rios also admitted a prior prison commitment for transportation of methamphetamine in January 2000. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

On February 2, 2011 at approximately 4:00 a.m. in the area of Joseph Road and Lucas Road in the unincorporated area of Stanislaus County, an officer from the Stanislaus County Auto-Theft Task Force (StanCATT) observed Rios driving a car while following his nephew who was driving a 1994 white Honda Accord. The Accord had not been reported stolen yet. However, the next morning, the owner of the Accord was preparing to go to work when she noticed that her vehicle had been stolen from her driveway in Ceres. Later that afternoon, officers discovered that Rios was helping his nephew dismantle the stolen Accord for parts. After his arrest, Rios posted bail and was released from custody.

On April 1, 2011 at approximately 10:30 p.m., an officer attempted to perform a routine traffic stop after observing Rios driving on Highway 99 without headlights. Rios then accelerated away at over 70 mph in a 55 mph zone and exited at the Mitchell Road off ramp. He ran two stop signs before he lost control of his car and spun out. Rios jumped out of his car and ran. The officer's canine partner, Zeus, was then deployed to assist in capturing Rios. After a three hundred yard chase, Zeus located Rios hiding under tall brush in an open field. Rios then started to punch Zeus in the face and body before assisting officers arrested Rios who displayed symptoms of being under the influence of alcohol. Rios was determined to have a .17% blood alcohol level.

Judge Linda McFadden sentenced Rios to three 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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