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DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: December 8, 2015
Re: Gabriel Bocanegra sentencing

For More Information Contact:

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Gabriel Bocanegra, age 25, of Riverbank, was sentenced to 7 years in state prison on December 4, 2015 by Judge Ricardo Cordova for Felony Vehicular Manslaughter with Gross Negligence and Felony Hit and Run causing Death in the February 22nd 2015 killing of pedestrian Thomas Larson in Oakdale.

On February 22, 2015, at approximately 5:08 p.m. Bocanegra was driving his mother's car on Highway 108 in downtown Oakdale on his way home from a local marijuana dispensary when he came across other vehicles stopped at the 3rd Avenue intersection. Bocanegra exceeded the speed limit driving into the left turn-only lane around the stopped traffic, hitting Mr. Larson in the crosswalk and breaking the windshield. Bocanegra fled the scene driving on side streets but had to punch-out the windshield in order to see where he was going.

Citizens called 911 to report the accident and Bocanegra's license number. Riverbank Police Services responded to Bocanegra's mother's address as she was the registered owner. Deputies then followed her when she left and drove toward Oakdale to pick him up. Bocanegra was arrested just after he got into his mother's car in west Oakdale, about two miles from the scene of Mr. Larson's death. A subsequent blood test showed marijuana metabolites in his system. His driving history included convictions for speeding (twice), running a stop sign, exhibition of speed, and being the at-fault driver in an accident.

The District Attorney's Office would like to thank the citizens who reported details of this incident to law enforcement, and express appreciation for the thorough investigation by Riverbank Police Services and the Oakdale Police Department.

Deputy District Attorney Tony Colacito prosecuted the case for the People. His position is funded by a grant provided by the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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