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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: 7/14/06
Re: Elder Abuse Fraud conviction
Eddie Henry Zarate, Jr.

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Eddie Henry Zarate, Jr. age 38, of Riverbank, was convicted on July 13, 2006 after a 3 day jury trial, for the felony crime of attempted theft from an elderly adult.

On December 30, 2004, Zarate and a co-defendant, Ricardo Daniel Garcia, age 26, of Modesto, entered a mobile home retirement community in Turlock. They approached an 82 year-old woman and offered their services as plumbers. The men made false representations to the victim regarding the condition of the plumbing in her mobile home. She was eventually persuaded to pay \$2,500.00 to replace a hot water heater, which was not broken. A neighbor who had been approached by the men earlier and turned them away, contacted police when he saw them at the victim's home. Turlock Police responded and were able to arrest the suspects shortly thereafter.

"The jury was asked to decide whether this was criminal fraud or just a normal business," said Deputy District Attorney Nate Baker, who prosecuted the case for the People. "The felony conviction shows that our community won't be fooled by those who try to con our senior citizens."

After the jury trial, the court further found that Zarate had a prior conviction for drunk driving causing great bodily injury that occurred in Santa Clara County in 1994. Zarate will be sentenced on August 10, 2006, and faces up to 4 years in state prison. Co-defendant Ricardo Daniel Garcia, who previously entered a guilty plea to the charge in March of 2005, has already been sentenced to 270 days in jail.

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