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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: August 4, 2008

Re: Porter convicted of Murder

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Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced this afternoon that Howard Douglas Porter, 57, of La Grange was convicted today after a 12-week jury trial of first degree murder with two special circumstances, attempted murder with premeditation, elder abuse, and theft from an elder of over \$150,000. The jury began deliberations on Friday afternoon and came back Monday afternoon with guilty verdicts.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorneys John R. Mayne and John Baker. Judge Thomas Zeff presided over the trial.

The jury found that Frank Craig, an elderly Hickman rancher, was murdered by defendant Porter on April 22, 2004 by driving Mr. Craig into the Ceres Main Canal. The jury further found that defendant Porter had tried to murder Frank Craig earlier by driving him into a tree after disabling the air bag. Testimony at trial included statements that defendant Porter had gained control over Mr. Craig's assets for a promise to build an agricultural museum. The museum was never built and Mr. Craig's assets were converted to personal use by defendant Porter.

Sentencing is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. September 2, 2008, in Department 5.

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