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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Date: October 16, 2009
Re: Michael Roger Bruce-3 years, 8 months
Prison for Felony Hit and Run and
Auto Theft and Evading a Peace Officer

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Michael Roger Bruce, age 46, of Empire, was convicted of hit and run, auto theft and two counts of evading a peace officer. Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey M. Laugero prosecuted the case on behalf of the People.

On June 13, 2007, a sheriff's deputy attempted to stop Michael Bruce for a vehicle code violation. Bruce fled and the deputy pursued for a short distance, but terminated the pursuit due to poor visibility and safety concerns. Bruce continued to drive at an unsafe speed, and lost control of his car as he turned onto Church Rd. A pedestrian walking on the shoulder suffered a broken leg when he was struck by Bruce's car. Bruce fled from the scene and continued his reckless driving. Bruce again lost control of the car and collided with a parked car and fence. Bruce fled on foot.

The deputy who had attempted to stop Bruce located a wallet with Bruce's Identification card in it inside the car. Officers from the California Highway Patrol responded to the collision scene and assisted with the investigation. A records check of the car Bruce had been driving indicated that it was registered to Bruce's mother. Bruce's mother reported the vehicle stolen and told officers no one had permission to drive the car because the registration was not current.

On November 27, 2007, Bruce was involved in another incident. He sideswiped a vehicle after a dispute with a female acquaintance. A warrant was issued for Bruce.

On December 6, 2007, sheriff's deputies spotted Bruce and attempted to stop him. Once again, Bruce fled from the deputies. Bruce and a male passenger abandoned the vehicle and tried to swim across the Tuolumne River. Both Bruce and the passenger were captured and arrested for the warrant and for evading the officers. Bruce has been previously convicted of a felony offense that falls under California's "Three Strikes" law and has served three prior prison terms.

Upon entry of the guilty plea, the Honorable Judge Zeff sentenced Bruce to 3 years and 8 months in state prison.

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