



OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

**Date: February 11, 2009**

**Re: Michael Chase Stafford - Auto Thief  
to 3 Years State Prison**

**Contact: Carol Shipley**

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**Modesto, California** – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced that Michael Chase Stafford, age 24, of Atwater, was convicted on February 12, 2009 of possession of a stolen car and possession of methamphetamine. Deputy District Attorney Jeff Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

The case arose out of events which occurred on January 27, 2009 at around noon in the Lowe's parking lot in Modesto when the defendant was seen driving a 2003 Honda Civic that was reported stolen on January 20, 2009 out of Modesto. The victim had left her car unattended while warming it up in her driveway. The defendant claimed that he purchased the car from an unknown person for \$500, but figured it was stolen since it was so cheap. Inside Stafford's front pocket, officers located a bindle which contained methamphetamine.

Upon entry of his guilty plea, Stafford was sentenced to three years in the California Rehabilitation Center by the Honorable Marie Silveira.

Law enforcement reminds drivers not to leave keys in their cars.

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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