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**PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

Date: March 8, 2010  
Re: Hector Leonel Picart  
Thief Receives 4 Years in Prison

**For More Information Contact:**

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**Modesto, California** - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Hector Leonel Picart, age 38 of Modesto, was sentenced on March 8, 2010 after pleading guilty on August 24, 2009 to grand theft and admitting that he had served a prior prison term. Deputy District Attorney W.R. McKenzie prosecuted the case for the People.

On March 22, 2007, Picart, posing as a mortgage broker, approached the elderly victim. The victim was in the process of purchasing a home in Modesto. Picart convinced the victim that he needed \$18,500 to put into escrow to fund the purchase of the home. Picart never placed the money into escrow, but instead cashed the check and kept the money. The victim attempted to contact Picart for several weeks. Finally, on May 30, 2007, the victim was able to get in touch with Picart who agreed to return the money to the victim and wrote two checks to the victim. Both checks were worthless and were returned for "Not Sufficient Funds".

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable John Whiteside sentenced Picart to 4 years in state prison. Judge Whiteside denied Picart's request to delay his sentencing and remanded him to be transported to state prison immediately.

This case was investigated by both the Modesto Police and the Stanislaus County District Attorney's Real Estate Fraud Unit.

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