



OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

Stanislaus County

832 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 300  
Modesto, CA 95354

Mailing: P. O. Box 442, Modesto, CA 95353  
Phone: (209) 525-5550 Fax: (209) 525-5545

**Birgit Fladager**  
**District Attorney**

Carol Shipley  
Assistant District Attorney

Chief Deputy District Attorneys

Jerry Begen  
Alan Cassidy  
Dave Harris

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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Carol Shipley

Date: January 6, 2011

Assistant District Attorney

Re: Anthony Joseph Mendez  
Auto Thief Gets  
3 Years, 8 Months Prison

Phone: (209) 525-5550

Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Anthony Joseph Mendez, age 30, of Keyes, was convicted on January 6, 2011 of auto theft, evading a peace officer, driving under the influence, and resisting arrest. Mendez is currently on parole for possession of a dangerous weapon from May 2007. Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey W. Mangar prosecuted the case for the People.

On December 24, 2010 around noon, an officer was dispatched to the area of northbound Highway 99 by Crowslanding Road on a report of a suspected drunk driver. Within minutes the officer responded and observed Mendez driving a 1996 red Ford Ranger erratically. A license plate check revealed that the truck was reported stolen less than an hour before from the owner's driveway on Greendale Drive in Keyes. The officer then activated his red lights and siren to perform a traffic stop, but Mendez accelerated away at over 60 m.p.h. in a 25 m.p.h. zone, running through a red traffic light and colliding with a white SUV in an attempt to evade the pursuing officer. Mendez, jumped out of the truck and ran, but was caught a short distance away. The officer determined that Mendez was under the influence of a stimulant. On Mendez's person, the officer also located a glass methamphetamine pipe as well as a syringe.

Upon entry of the plea, the Honorable Thomas Zeff sentenced Mendez to three years and four months in state prison.

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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