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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: Zachary Robert Mitchell
Re: Conviction for Drunk Driving

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Zachary Robert Mitchell, age 26 of Taft, was convicted by a jury of Driving Under the Influence (DUI). Prior to the trial, Mitchell pled no contest to a charge of Driving on a Suspended License and having three prior DUI convictions. Deputy District Attorney Mabel Lew prosecuted the case for the People.

On December 21, 2009 in Patterson, CHP Officer Hendricks saw a silver Saturn stopped on the eastern edge of the roadway on northbound Interstate 5 just south of the Sperry Avenue exit. He noticed that the headlights and the brake lights were activated. He pulled in behind the vehicle to see if there was any need for assistance. As he approached the passenger side of the vehicle, he noticed the engine was running, the keys were in the ignition, and that there were two adult male occupants who appeared to be asleep. He knocked on the window and the occupants awoke. He smelled a strong odor of an alcoholic beverage emitting from the inside of the vehicle, but did not find any alcoholic beverage containers in or around the vehicle. Mitchell was seated behind the steering wheel in the driver's seat. Mitchell had an odor of an alcoholic beverage on his breath, and admitted driving to the location where the officer found them. He told the officer that his driver's license had been suspended for a prior Driving Under the Influence conviction. He also admitted the he had consumed alcoholic beverages in Bakersfield prior to driving. Mitchell provided breath samples which revealed that his breath alcohol level was 0.10%.

Upon receiving the guilty verdict, the Honorable Linda McFadden ordered Mitchell to enroll in a residential alcohol treatment program and return for sentencing on April 8, 2011.

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