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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: January 29, 2010
Re: Dennis Riveira
Two-time Felony Drunk Driver
Receives 7 Years in State Prison

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Dennis Riveira, age 53, of Modesto, was sentenced to 7 years in state prison on January 29, 2010 for two separate instances of driving under the influence, and also having inflicted great bodily injury, felony reckless driving while evading a peace officer, and driving on a suspended following his conviction for these offenses on November 30, 2009. Deputy District Attorney Anthony Colacito prosecuted the case for the People.

On February 12, 2009, a Modesto Police Department officer witnessed Riveira speeding in downtown Modesto. After the officer activated the lights and siren on the patrol car, Riveira ran multiple red traffic lights before causing a t-bone traffic collision at the intersection of I St and 6th St. The two occupants of the other car were knocked unconscious. One occupant had his teeth go through his upper lip, received a cut to the back of his head, cuts to his nose and right bicep/elbow and seatbelt bruising. Many of his lacerations resulted in scarring. The other passenger suffered a lacerated right kidney, a fractured right rib, a temporary air pocket formation in a lung, a bruise to the inner chest wall, internal hemorrhaging and a laceration to the forehead. Riveira was extricated from his vehicle and then hospitalized due to his injuries.

Upon investigation, police determined that Riveira was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the collision. The defendant's driver's license had been suspended as a result of his three prior DUI convictions suffered in the one and a half years prior to this incident.

Then, on February 27, 2009, the Modesto Police Department responded to a citizen's report of a possible intoxicated driver in the area of Blue Gum in Modesto. The citizen reported that the driver was driving erratically, including, but not limited to, almost crashing three times at intersections, accelerating faster than normal, almost hitting curbs, twice stopping many car lengths back from vehicles stopped at intersections and almost t-boning a vehicle. Riveira was identified as the driver and an investigation was conducted. Police determined that Riveira was once again under the influence of alcohol while driving. Riveira stated that he had not been drinking and that he "never" does.

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