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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MERCED MAN CONVICTED IN THEFT OF TELEVISION

A Merced County jury convicted Merced resident Gilbert Felix Alvarado of petty theft for stealing a television set from Wal-Mart on September 29, 2007. Because Alvarado has prior theft convictions, the offense was elevated to a felony. The jury acquitted the 27 year old Alvarado of being an active participant in a criminal street gang. Wednesday's verdict came after a 4 day trial.

According to Deputy District Attorney Matthew Martinez, who prosecuted the case, Loss Prevention Officers from Wal-Mart observed Alvarado remove a security device from the television. After paying for a few smaller items, Alvarado left the store with the television. As he fled, Alvarado yelled out the name of a criminal street gang. When police arrived, Alvarado again attempted to flee, but was tasered and taken into custody.

"I appreciate the jury's attention to the testimony in this case. Alvarado has several theft related convictions on his record. He continues to prey on individuals and businesses," said Martinez. Martinez also noted that Wal-Mart security's vigilance led to the arrest and conviction. "When thieves steal from retail stores, the store is not the only victim. All of us pay due to the cost of theft to the retailer", noted Martinez.

Superior Court Judge Marc A. Garcia presided over the trial of Alvarado, who was represented by Deputy Public Defender Paul Lyon. Because Alvarado has a prior strike conviction and has served a prior prison term, he is facing 7 years in prison when he is sentenced on December 30.