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JUDGE SENTENCES TWO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MEN FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING

Two Southern California men were sentenced Friday in Merced County Superior Court to nine years in state prison for transporting two pounds of methamphetamine with the intent to sell. The sentence, imposed by Judge Carol Ash, stemmed from an arrest in Los Banos in September of 2007, according to Merced County Deputy District Attorney Steven Slocum, who prosecuted the case.

Gabriel Reyes Guerrero, 35, and Martin Herrera Robles, 38, both of Moreno Valley, were sentenced to nine years in state prison. The men were arrested by officers from the Los Banos Police Department while driving a Ford truck registered to Robles with a lawnmower in the truck bed. Attached to the lawnmower was the grass catcher, and inside the grass catcher were two pounds of methamphetamine with an estimated street value of nearly \$100,000, Slocum said.

Officers also located two handguns, a .45 caliber and a .38 caliber, both semi-automatic. Neither gun was registered to Robles or Guerrero. The jury found both defendants guilty of personal possession of a firearm while trafficking narcotics, Slocum said.

"I believe the sentence was fair considering that the defendants were armed and had such a large amount of methamphetamine." Slocum credited the work of the Los Banos Police Department and the Merced Multi-Agency Narcotics Task Force in making the arrests. "Local law enforcement worked together to take down two Southern California dope dealers who were planning to peddle narcotics in our county," Slocum said.

The trial lasted seven days. The jury deliberated for less than five hours before returning with their verdicts, Slocum noted.