DISTRICT ATTORNEY

DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Larry D. Morse II

CHIEF DEPUTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
David Moranda

ASSISTANT
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Joseph M. Tresidder

CHIEF DEPUTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Harold L. Nutt

2222 "M" STREET, MERCED, CA 95340
TELEPHONE (AREA CODE 209) 385-7381
FAX (209) 725-3563

July 20, 2007

SEX CRIMES RESULT IN 20 YEAR PRISON SENTENCE

A 40 year old Hilmar man was sentenced to 20 years in state prison Thursday after pleading guilty to three counts of lewd and lascivious acts with a child aged 14 or 15, and fifteen counts of unlawful sexual relations with a minor, according to Merced County Deputy District Attorney David Sandhaus, who prosecuted the case.

Keith Crane was arrested by Merced County Sheriff's deputies in April following an investigation into allegations that he had sponsored parties in his home at which he provided alcohol and marijuana to minors. The investigation revealed that Crane then began a sexual relationship with a 15 year old female that lasted several months, Sandhaus said.

"This defendant represents the worst nightmare for every parent of a teenager," Sandhaus said. "You hope and pray that every time your child goes off to a party that he or she is being properly supervised by responsible adults. But in this case there was a predator waiting at the party," he said.

Sandhaus lauded the work of Merced County Sheriff's Detective Lane Clark and District Attorney Investigator Anna Hazel in putting together a solid case.

Crane entered his plea before Merced County Superior Court Commissioner Harry Jacobs. As part of his plea agreement, Crane will have to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

-30-