Arroyo Grande Police Department

MEDIA RELEASE

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BURGLARY AND RECEIVING STOLEN PROPERTY ARREST

On July 25, 2010, at about 8:20 PM, Arroyo Grande Police Department officers responded to the Arroyo Grande Motel at 329 Traffic Way regarding a report of a battery committed against one of the motel owners. The officers' preliminary investigation revealed that a male and a female checked into the motel several hours earlier arriving in a U-Haul rental truck that was no longer at the motel when the officers arrived. The male became involved in an argument with one of the motel owners during which a physical altercation ensued and the male fled the area before he could be identified. The motel owner asked for assistance from the police in evicting the couple from the motel.

Officers began to interview the female, subsequently identified as Teresa Longhofer, a 24-year-old resident of Grover Beach, about the motel room registration and noticed several inconsistencies in her responses including the information she provided about her male companion. When Longhofer allowed the officers to enter the motel room with her, they noticed several pieces of property that were subsequently identified as property stolen in recent commercial burglaries in Arroyo Grande and San Luis Obispo. As the officers continued their investigation, they were able to identify Longhofer's male companion as Shawn Stankewitz, a 26-year-old resident of Grover Beach whom the motel owner identified as the individual involved in the physical altercation with him.

After Longhofer was evicted from the motel, officers conducted a mobile surveillance of her until she hid in the shadows behind a house. A U-Haul rental truck appeared in front of the house and Longhofer entered the passenger side of the truck. As the truck drove away, officers stopped it and detained Longhofer and the driver whom they identified as Stankewitz. Both Longhofer and Stankewitz were taken into custody during the vehicle stop, arrested for receiving stolen property based upon the stolen property recovered in the motel room and booked at the San Luis Obispo County Jail.

The U-Haul rental truck that Stankewitz was driving when he was arrested was not the same U-Haul rental truck that the couple drove to the Arroyo Grande Motel that was later discovered abandoned on Station Way in Arroyo Grande. The U-Haul rental truck being driven by Stankewitz when he was arrested was later determined to be stolen from Grover Beach.

Based on the continuing follow-up investigation and the identification of stolen property by the victims of burglaries, Stankewitz was re-arrested at San Luis Obispo County Jail as he was being released on bail on July 26, 2010. This time he was arrested for receiving stolen property, being in possession of a stolen vehicle and fraudulent use of a credit card.

As the investigation progressed, information was developed that led to the service of a search warrant on a storage unit in Grover Beach rented by Stankewitz. During the search warrant service, about 45 items of additional property were recovered that was subsequently identified as having been stolen in burglaries in Arroyo Grande and San Luis Obispo. The locations targeted in all the burglaries were either businesses or churches. By the time the search warrant was served and the recovered property was identified by burglary victims, Stankewitz had been released on bail from San Luis Obispo County Jail and could not be immediately arrested for a third time; however, additional charges of receiving stolen property were filed against him with the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney.