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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mother reunited with son after 5 year court battle in Mexico**

**(Woodland, CA)** – District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that after five long years and extended court battles in Mexico, a mother’s unrelenting efforts to be reunited with her son were recently rewarded across international borders.

On Thursday, July 1, 2010, 40 year old Virginia Carruego of Sacramento, and her 12 year old daughter Ariessana Saucedo were reunited with their son, and brother, now 10 year old Hector Saucedo in Chihuahua, Mexico. Ms. Carruego and Ariessana had last seen Hector when he was five years old.

On July 18, 2005, Ms. Carruego, then a resident of Yolo County came to the Yolo County District Attorney’s Office Child Abduction Unit seeking help in getting her five year old son returned from his paternal grandmother’s residence in Chihuahua, Mexico.

Ms. Carruego had allowed both Hector and Ariessana to go with their grandmother, Ms. Briones, after the grandmother had been visiting Ms. Carruego and the children for the Christmas holidays in 2004. The understanding was that the grandmother would return the children the following June and in the meantime Ms. Carruego would use the time to improve their living situation. The children’s father was incarcerated in a Federal Penitentiary. The grandmother returned the girl to California in February, but come June, refused to return the boy. Ms. Briones stopped all communication between Hector and Ms. Carruego and hired an attorney in Mexico to try to get guardianship of her grandson against the wishes of the mother.

During the ensuing 5 years, Deputy District Attorney Steven Mount, now an Assistant Chief and supervisor of the Child Abduction Unit; Deputy District Attorney Colin Anderson, now an attorney with the Yolo County Child Support Services; Deputy District Attorney Barbara Enriquez; Investigator Mike Coughlin and Enforcement Officer Angela Smith have all worked diligently on the case along with Supervising Deputy Attorney General Raquel Gonzales and Special Agent in Charge Val Jimenez of the Foreign Prosecutions Unit of the California Attorney General’s Office, to reunite Hector with his mother. The Yolo County District Attorney’s Office and the California Attorney General’s Office sent representatives to Mexico on three (3) different occasions in an

effort to return Hector to his Mother. This included appearing at a Hague Hearing in Chihuahua and a meeting with officials from the Mexican Government in Mexico City.

The Yolo County Child Abduction Unit submitted a Hague Petition which was filed in court in Chihuahua, Mexico on March 22, 2006. The Hague Petition requested that Hector be returned to the United States pursuant to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, and court proceedings began in Mexico. Typically, a Hague Petition is decided within a short period of time.

In this case, over the years, the court in Chihuahua, Mexico repeatedly ruled that Hector should be returned to Ms. Carruego. However, the grandmother filed numerous appeals and amparos (claims of a civil rights violation) with the case continuing for years without a final ruling. "Special recognition should go to Assistant Chief Deputy Steve Mount and Supervising Deputy Attorney General Raquel Gonzales who never gave up their commitment to bring Hector back. It was a real team effort for five years with a lot of dedicated people working on this case." Stated Colin Anderson who spent approximately four years as the Deputy DA assigned to the case.

On Thursday, July 1, 2010, Ms. Carruego and her daughter, Ariessana Saucedo, went to Chihuahua, Mexico in hopes of seeing Hector and possibly having him return home with them. Ariessana and Ms. Carruego went to Ms. Briones place of business. When Ms. Briones saw her granddaughter Ariessana, she opened the door to Ariessana and Ms. Carruego. After speaking together, Ms. Briones brought Ms. Carruego and Ariessana to her home where they were reunited with Hector. Ms. Briones agreed to allow Hector to return to live with his mother and sister. The next day, the family and attorneys went to the court in Chihuahua where Ms. Briones and Ms. Carruego filed their official resolution to the case that Hector was to be returned to his mother's custody and live with his mother and sister.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Hector crossed the border back into the United States with his mother and sister Ariessana and began the journey to resume his life with his family back in the United States. "This mother showed bravery and persistence in the fight to have her son returned to her and the many dedicated people in Child Abduction Units at both the county and state level never waivered in their support for the rule of international law that demanded this result," stated Assistant Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Mount who initiated the case back in 2005. Ms Carruego said, "My children and I will always be very grateful to Yolo County D.A for all they did in reuniting our family."

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