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PRESS RELEASE

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Juvenile Gang Member Sentenced to Life for Hunting Rival Gang

Jesus Rosillo-Castro, 17, Chico, a criminal street gang member, was sentenced today by Butte County Superior Court judge Tamara Mosbarger to 15 years to life for shooting at an occupied vehicle. District Attorney Mike Ramsey said Castro had pleaded guilty on May 28, 2013 to a charge of shooting at an occupied vehicle with a gang enhancement. Castro was 16 at the time of the shooting. He had been involved with his particular criminal street gang since the sixth grade.

Ramsey said on October 25, 2013, Castro, along with four others, obtained a high-powered hunting rifle and drove around Chico in search of any rival gang members. Near the intersection of Midway and Hagen Lane in Chico, the five drove up behind a pickup driven by a rival gang member. The driver's wife was seated next to him in the passenger seat. Castro leaned out of his passenger window and fired shots toward the victims' pickup. One bullet entered the rear window and traveled through the passenger seat headrest narrowly missing the female victim. A second bullet entered the rear window and traveled through the driver's seat headrest grazing the sweatshirt worn by the male victim. It was estimated the driver was missed by less than one-half inch. Ramsey said it was fortuitous neither of the two victims were killed.

Ramsey said, Castro's co-defendants, David Abed, 17, Nicholas Lewis, 19, and Andres Lozano, 14, all of Chico, testified at a May 28, 2013 preliminary hearing regarding Castro's involvement in the shooting. Ramsey said Abed, Lewis and Lozano have also pleaded guilty to their involvement in the shooting. Abed and Lewis face a state prison sentence of 7 years, 8 months when they are scheduled to be sentenced later next month. Lozano's case has since been sent to juvenile court where he faces a life sentence due to his gang involvement. Jose Serrato-Avila, 19, also a co-defendant and fellow gang member of Castro's faces trial July 22, 2013.

At Castro's sentencing, the prosecution argued the defendant's actions proved he was a significant threat to public safety. The Court stated as a mother, she found no pleasure in sentencing a young man to a life but believed it was an appropriate sentence in light of the defendant's serious and life-threatening actions.

Ramsey said this case was another example of youth involvement in local criminal street gangs and it emphasized the serious risk criminal street gangs pose to Butte County's public safety. This lengthy sentence was necessary for the safety of the public and hopes the young man works towards rehabilitation during his incarceration making him eligible for parole.