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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STOCKTON STING OPERATION LEADS TO ARRESTS, CITATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS ILLEGALLY ADVERTISING AUTO REPAIRS

*Arrests underscore Department of Consumer Affairs' efforts to halt
unlicensed businesses*

STOCKTON – Ten (10) people have been arrested for providing unlicensed auto repair services during a sting operation conducted by the Bureau of Automotive Affairs (Bureau) and the San Joaquin County District Attorney's Office.

California law requires automotive repair shops to be registered with the Bureau. Licensure helps protect California consumers by ensuring a fair and competitive automotive repair marketplace and gives consumers a means to seek redress if they have problems with a licensee.

"Consumers really expose themselves to risks when they go to an unlicensed automotive repair shop," said Bureau Chief Sherry Mehl. "Consumers should make sure they hire only licensed shops. That way, if they have a problem with a repair, the Bureau can step in and help them."

The operation targeted unregistered individuals who advertised automotive repair services on the Internet. Bureau investigators responded to the online ads and made appointments with these individuals to repair an undercover automobile that the Bureau prepared for the sting.

At the appointment, the Bureau checked each individual's business license. Unlicensed individuals were cited for violating the law and advised that the matter would be referred to the San Joaquin County District Attorney's Office for prosecution.

The 10 individuals who were taken into custody were cited for operating without a license and then released. They will appear in court and could face fines of up to \$1,000 and up to six months in jail.

“Most businesses and professionals do a good job of providing services that benefit consumers,” said the Department’s Acting Director Brian Stiger. “These arrests are a vivid example of why it is important for consumers to make certain they are doing business only with licensed repair facilities.”

Consumers can find out the status of a license or file a complaint by calling the Department of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-952-5210 or visiting DCA’s Web site at www.dca.gov.

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The Bureau of Automotive Repair operates under the umbrella of the California Department of Consumer Affairs. The Bureau licenses more than 34,000 licensed Automotive Repair Dealers.