



OFFICE OF THE
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COUNTY OF SHASTA

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PRESS RELEASE

January 29, 2009

Nicholas Christopher Smith, age 23, was sentenced to 6 years in state prison this morning by the Honorable Judge Wilson Curle in Department One of the Shasta County Court. On January 15, 2009, Smith pleaded guilty to Hit and Run, in violation of Vehicle Code section 20001, a felony and Vehicular Manslaughter without Gross Negligence, in violation of Penal Code section 192(c)(2), a misdemeanor. On the same date he admitted a violation of probation for another felony case where he was on probation for Grand Theft of a Firearm and First Degree Burglary.

The victim, Denise Renee Portillo, died after she fell out of the pickup as it rounded a curve along Highway 151 near Homer Road in Shasta Lake. After an altercation broke out at the residence where Smith and Portillo were, Smith, Chad Albright, and Portillo fled the scene in his vehicle because he heard sirens and believed law enforcement was coming. He encouraged Portillo to come with him. She initially did not go with him but eventually jumped in the bed of the pick-up truck. Smith sped off and Portillo fell out of the truck. Being aware that she fell out of the truck, he attempted to put her in the truck but he and Albright were unable to. Instead he fled on foot.

The case was prosecuted by Emily Mees and investigated by Shasta County Sheriff's Office Detective Mike Tumelson.