

RIVERSIDE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



**ROD PACHECO**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

**DA SEEKS DEATH PENALTY IN SLAYING**

A Moreno Valley man charged with the gruesome torture and murder of a 16-year-old girl could face the death penalty if convicted. Roman Aldana is charged with the stabbing death of Kayla Wood, whose body was found inside a burned and abandoned house in Moreno Valley. Wood was brutally tortured and killed by Aldana and two youths, who have been charged as adults, who then lit the house on fire to conceal the crimes. The District Attorney's office made the decision using its newly established policy for seeking the death penalty. A careful review of the case by top prosecutors, consulting with law enforcement and victim's family members about their wishes, and meeting with defense attorneys about their client, factor into the process before the decision is ultimately made by District Attorney Rod Pacheco. All three are scheduled to appear in court in April for a preliminary hearing to determine if there is sufficient evidence to proceed to trial.

**A VICTIM'S VOICE WILL BE HEARD**

**PAROLE AGENTS ADDED TO TASK FORCE TARGETING SEX OFFENDERS**

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in conjunction with the Riverside County District Attorney's Office has added two parole agents to the Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement (SAFE) Team.

Under California law, convicted sex offenders must register with local law enforcement in the city of residence within five days. The addition of two parole agents will greatly enhance the interagency cooperation of supervising registered sex offenders. With nearly 3,285 registered sex offenders living in Riverside County, the SAFE Team focuses on monitoring, surveillance, tracking, arrest,



registration, and inspection of these sex offenders. The task force works with local law enforcement to provide sex offender release and location notification to the public. A total of 316 arrests were made

by the task force in 2007. Also included in the task force is the S.P.I.D.E.R. (Sexual Predator Internet Decoy Enforcement in Riverside County) Unit which coordinates undercover Internet sexual predator sting operations. This arm of the task force operates in Southwest Riverside County. The SAFE Team was formed in May of 2006 and combines the resources of the District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, Probation Department, Banning Police Department, Corona Police Department, California Department of Justice, and now includes the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Division of Adult Parole Operations.

**MAN SENTENCED TO 250 YEARS FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER**

A Rubidoux man convicted of attempting to murder four people, including two children, was sentenced to more than 250 years in state prison for his crimes. Max Romero received the maximum sentence by the judge. Romero was convicted of four counts of attempted murder in

the shootings of his girlfriend, her mother, and his girlfriend's two young children. One of the children was in grave condition at the time of the shooting and was not expected to live. She miraculously survived but suffers from learning disabilities.

**Community Outreach**

**DA College Academy**

The new student outreach program, which began last year, allows students considering a career in law, paralegal studies, or victim services to gain hands-on experience each spring, summer and fall. Students will tour other law enforcement agencies, learn courtroom procedures and how to prepare for a trial and assist on active cases when paired with a mentor. The next academy begins March 28th, we will be accepting applications for the summer academy until May 9th.

**DA Citizens' Academy**

The Academy will consist of an eight to ten week program, meeting once a week, designed to immerse students in the judicial process. Curriculum will offer participants a clearer understanding of both the process of a trial and the inner-workings of the District Attorney's Office. As a tool for educating and enlightening the public the function of the District Attorney's Office. We will be accepting applications beginning in April with the program scheduled to begin in May.

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## Legislative Corner

*The following is a sampling of key legislation sponsored by the Riverside County District Attorney's Office.*

### **SB 1343 - Elderly Testimony Support**

**(State Senator Jim Battin)**

Often times, elder or dependent adults are compelled to testify in court and have had serious problems facing their abuser without any support mechanism in place. New legislation being sponsored by State Senator Jim Battin will offer that sense of security by expanding current law to allow elders or dependant adults testifying in abuse cases to have up to two support-personnel to be with them while giving testimony during trial. This new law will empower many elder victims of abuse to stand up in court and face their abuser with confidence and a strong sense of security.

### **SB 1344 – Kidnapping Enhancements**

**(State Senator Jim Battin)**

While existing law hands down strong penalties for those who engage in kidnapping or other related crimes, it has not been enough to deter would-be offenders from committing such a fear-inspiring act as depriving a victim of their liberty. This legislation, currently being carried by Senator Jim Battin, would change that problem. It will require a mandatory punishment of 1 year for every day that the offender deprived the victim of his or her liberty. Essentially, 1 day means 1 year or 1 month means a minimum of 30 years in prison.

### **AB 2172 – Elder Abuse Registration**

**(Assemblymember Paul Cook)**

Existing law proscribes various crimes committed against an elder or dependent adult related to physical and financial abuse when the alleged abuser has knowledge that the victim is an elder or dependent adult, including causing or permitting an elder or dependent adult to suffer or inflicting thereon unjustifiable physical pain or mental suffering and violating any provision of law proscribing theft, embezzlement, forgery, fraud, or identity theft, with respect to the person or property of

an elder or dependent adult. This bill would require the Department of Justice to develop an Internet Web site, to be updated regularly, which would make available to the public certain information concerning persons who have been convicted of violating at least one of specified crimes against elder or dependent adults. It also requires a facility that releases from incarceration any person from a commitment for an offense for which the person is required to be listed to provide specified information to the department regarding the offense.

### **SB 1655 – Badges**

**(State Senator Bob Dutton)**

In response to the recent opinion by Attorney General's Office regarding the misuse of honorary and non-sworn officer badges, this new legislation will allow certain public safety officials, such as custodial officers (correctional officers) and state or county prosecutors, to carry or keep their badges corresponding to their specific duties. The legislation will further allow the surviving families of peace officers to retain the badge in memoriam. Moreover, retired peace officers will also become an exception, and be allowed to retire with their badges.

### **AB 2190 – Domestic Violence Reporting**

**(Assemblymember Bill Emmerson)**

Existing law provides that child protective services agencies, law enforcement, prosecution, child abuse and domestic violence experts, and community-based organizations serving abused children and victims of domestic violence shall develop, in collaboration with one another, protocols as to how law enforcement and child welfare agencies will cooperate in their response to incidents of domestic violence in homes in which a child resides. This bill would provide that a law enforcement officer shall notify the appropriate local child welfare agency whenever substantial evidence exists to support a finding by the law enforcement

officer that a child has been exposed to secondary abuse by witnessing an incident of domestic violence in a home in which the child resides, as specified.

### **AB 2155 – Tribal Land Trespassing**

**(Assemblymember Bonnie Garcia)**

Currently, it considered a misdemeanor for someone to intentionally interfere with the due course of business by obstructing or intimidating those carrying on said business. This protection has proven invaluable for the business community as a whole, as it provides a secure mode of prosecuting various criminals for a broad range of acts. Unfortunately, our local Indian tribes do not find themselves protected by such laws as they currently exist and as such have found their main mode of business obstructed, gaming facilities. A new bill to be introduced by Assemblymember Bonnie Garcia, would provide that "any person who willfully enters upon a gaming facility owned and operated" by an Indian tribe and violates the above-mentioned rule, is also guilty of a misdemeanor.

### **SB 1287 – Real Estate Fraud**

**(State Senator Dennis Hollingsworth)**

As real estate owners often do not live anywhere near their real property, they are often unaware of transactions taking place regarding said property. Often times real estate fraud occurs through the simple act of placing a "For Sale" sign on a plot of land and listing a different number as the contact. The land can be sold using faked titles and the actual owner is never notified. SB 1287, being sponsored by State Senator Dennis Hollingsworth, will offer protection from real estate fraud in Riverside County to real estate owners in a very simple and very effective way. Anytime there is a transaction regarding their plot of land, a postcard will be sent to the owner of the land notifying them of the change in status.

*For more information on these bills, or for any legislative questions relating to the District Attorney's office, please contact Kelly Jay at (951) 955-0933 or email her at [KellyJay@RivCoDA.org](mailto:KellyJay@RivCoDA.org).*

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