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City of Stockton Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, April 3, 2007

Council Approves Safe and Sane Fireworks Ordinance

(Stockton, CA) - The Stockton City Council voted 7-0, to amend the Stockton Municipal Code to prohibit the use, sale, purchase and transport of the category of fireworks identified by the State of California Fire Marshal as, "Safe and Sane." Under the amended ordinance, the Stockton Police and Fire Department will be allowed to confiscate Safe and Sane Fireworks.

Safe and Sane Fireworks are those that cannot fly through the air, project or shoot anything (except showers of sparks), move across the ground, or explode. State law only addressed the manufacturing and date and time of sales of such fireworks, requiring local ordinances to control the allowable sales and use. For example, state law requires that this category of fireworks be labeled with the State Fire Marshal Seal of Registration; can only be sold between noon on June 28 through noon on July 6; must be sold from a fixed location; and, cannot be sold or given to anyone under the age of 16.

Both Stockton Police and Fire Departments agree that fireworks do cause injuries. Safe and Sane Fireworks allow for a migration of the illegal category of Dangerous Fireworks, defined by the state as firecrackers, skyrockets, roman candles, chasers, sparklers, torpedoes, and fireworks kits. The July 4th holiday is a very busy time for public safety. Responding to reports of fireworks takes public safety personnel away from other emergency and urgent calls for service. In addition, when fireworks are confiscated, the Fire Department must turn them over to the State for destruction, adding additional operational costs.

Supporters of the sale of Safe and Sane fireworks explained that churches and other non-profit groups often use the sale of fireworks as fundraising opportunities. In addition, illegal fireworks create problems for Safe and Sane sales in communities where sales are allowable.

For additional information about Safe and Sane Fireworks and the amended ordinance, please contact Chief Dave Hafey, Stockton Fire Marshal, at (209) 937-8566.

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