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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Joseph Marsh Pleads in Firework Incident

On September 7, 2011, Joseph Marsh, 40, of Eureka, pleaded no contest to misdemeanor child endangerment.

The sentencing was held over to September 28, 2011 so that the victim's mother could be present.

This case stemmed from a July 4, 2010 incident when Marsh, who was off-duty as a sheriff's deputy at the time, enlisted the help of a friend's 10-year-old daughter to hold and light a firework. The firework exploded, injuring both Marsh and the girl.

"Joseph Marsh displayed incredibly poor judgment," Assistant District Attorney Kelly Neel said. "While no one could have foreseen the devastating injuries sustained by the child and Mr. Marsh, it is precisely that uncertainty that resulted in the criminal filing."

"It is terribly unfortunate that a child was so gravely injured in this incident," added District Attorney Paul Gallegos. "More than anything, I hope this case serves as a reminder that children must be protected. Those that fail to do so will face consequences."

Deputy District Attorney Nicole Bockelman was the handling prosecutor in this case and the Honorable Judge Christopher Wilson presided.