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Final Five Get Intervention Plan in Cheerleader Hazing Case

(Houston, TX) – Pretrial intervention was approved Monday (Dec. 22) for the final five defendants in the hazing case of seven former Morton Ranch High School cheerleaders, District Attorney Kenneth Magidson announced.

County Court Judge Jay Karahan accepted the intervention agreements between the prosecution and defense, which will enable the five defendants to avoid further criminal action if they adhere to the stringent terms of the closely supervised program.

Agreeing to the diversion program are 17-year-old Kelly Buffa, Kirsten Davis and Madison Tanner; and 18-year-old Hannah Cochran and Meigan Goff. Terms are the same as those in the agreement approved on Dec. 12 for two other former cheerleader squad members.

Over the next year, they will be required to obey all laws, perform at least 60 hours of community service work, write letters of apology for the hazing offense, provide truthful testimony if any of the cases need to go to trial, submit to alcohol or drug testing as requested, and live up to other conditions in the agreement.

Seven varsity cheerleaders were indicted Nov. 19 on charges of hazing members of the junior varsity cheerleading squad in an off-campus incident July 25. The Class B misdemeanor charge includes a range of punishment, if convicted, of up to six months in jail and fine of \$2,000.

If the defendants violate any terms of their agreement, prosecutors can void it and proceed with criminal trial. Completion of the program will enable them to have charges dismissed in December 2009.

Marc Brown, chief of the DA's Misdemeanor Division, represented prosecutors in the crafting of the agreement for the program. The Harris County Community Corrections and Supervision Department supervises the program, which will be overseen by the DA's Office.

In general, requests for pretrial intervention programs are usually made by defense attorneys. The DA's Office evaluates these requests on factors such as the type and severity of the offense, the defendant's background and character, and the likelihood that the defendant can successfully complete the intervention. Requests are carefully reviewed, and may be granted only in appropriate situations.

(End)