**SANTA CRUZ POLICE DEPARTMENT**
**155 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060**
**www.santacruzpolice.com**

# MEDIA RELEASE

**DATE/TIME:** **January 6, 2012—10:55am & 12:35pm**

**LOCATIONS:** **500 Block Ocean Street/137 Dakota Ave (San Lorenzo Park)**

**TOPIC:** **Arsons—ARREST** **CASE NUMBERS:** **12S-00173 & 12S-00175**

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**INVOLVED SUBJECTS:**

**1.** **Name: Vargas-Chavez, Victor** **Arrested: [XX] Yes**
**DOB: 49 year old male** **Charges: 451(b) PC, 452(c) PC**
**Address: Merced Resident**

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**INFORMATION:**
**On Friday, January 6, 2012 at approximately 10:55am, Santa Cruz police officers were dispatched to an arson that occurred in the 500 block of Ocean Street at a hotel. Officers learned that a male suspect had lit a palm tree next to the hotel on fire and walked away. Santa Cruz Fire personnel extinguished the flames to the tree before it caught the hotel on fire.**

**At approximately 12:35pm on the same date, Santa Cruz police officers were dispatched to an arson that occurred in San Lorenzo Park located at 137 Dakota Avenue. The male suspect had lit a palm tree and a wooden post on fire near the children's play area in the park. Santa Cruz Fire personnel extinguished the palm tree in San Lorenzo Park. The wooden post had a scorch mark on it.**

**Santa Cruz police officers and Santa Cruz County District Attorney investigators contacted Victor Vargas-Chavez who was seen lighting the tree and wooden post on fire in the park. Vargas-Chavez had a lighter in his possession that he was using to light the fires. In addition, Vargas-Chavez was identified by a witness as the person who lit the palm tree on fire next to the hotel on Ocean Street. Vargas-Chavez was arrested for arson. Vargas-Chavez was booked into the County Jail for the listed charges.**

**Fortunately, there were no injuries or burns to anyone at the hotel or in the park.**

**Anyone with additional information about this incident is encouraged to call Santa Cruz Police Department Investigations at: (831) 420-5820**

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**To Leave ANONYMOUS information regarding this incident, please call our TIP LINE (831) 420-5995 or leave an anonymous tip on our website at www.santacruzpolice.com**