




**GREGORY D. TOTTEN**  
**District Attorney**

**NEWS RELEASE**

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Contact: Howard Wise  
Senior Deputy District Attorney  
Telephone: (805) 662-1736  
E-mail: [howard.wise@ventura.org](mailto:howard.wise@ventura.org)  
Approved: JLM   
Date: Tuesday, August 1, 2017  
Release No.: 17-056

**TWO MEN FACE OVER 5 YEARS FOR STEALING  
OVER \$200,000 OF MISSION PRODUCE AVOCADOS**

*VENTURA, California* – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that Carlos Chavez (DOB 09/21/88), of Oxnard, and Joseph Valenzuela (DOB 11/19/78), of Santa Paula, pleaded guilty to felony grand theft and conspiracy, and admitted a special allegation for taking over \$200,000 worth of avocados. This matter was investigated by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office and the District Attorney's High Tech Task Force.

Chavez and Valenzuela worked for Mission Produce at a facility on Dufau Road in Oxnard. From January to June 2017, they sold large amounts of avocados out of the back of the facility for cash. They then pocketed the proceeds. When the Sheriff's deputies executed a search warrant on Chavez's house, they seized approximately \$140,000 in cash from a safe in his bedroom.

As part of his guilty plea, Chavez agreed to forfeit the money for victim restitution. The sentencing and restitution hearings are scheduled for November 3, 2017, at 8:30 a.m. in courtroom 10 of the Ventura Superior Court, County of Ventura. Both defendants face up to five years eight months in jail.

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

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