



News Releases

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ICE and DOJ joint enforcement action at Iowa meatpacking plant

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents executed a criminal search warrant this morning at Agriprocessors, Inc., in Postville, Iowa, for evidence relating to aggravated identity theft, fraudulent use of Social Security numbers and other crimes, as well as a civil search warrant for people illegally in the United States. The announcement was made by United States Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa Matt M. Dummermuth and ICE Special Agent in Charge Claude Arnold.

"This is not the first time this office has been a part of a criminal worksite enforcement operation," said Dummermuth. "However, this is the largest operation of its type ever in Iowa. Agents and officers from federal, state, and local agencies are involved today. The coordination and logistical planning efforts have been going on for months."

"ICE is committed to enforcing the nation's immigration laws in the workplace to maintain the integrity of the immigration system," said Claude Arnold, Special Agent in Charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Bloomington, Minnesota. "We carry out that obligation in a fair and responsible manner, ensuring humanitarian needs are taken into consideration."

Anyone encountered during this operation who is discovered to be in the United States illegally eventually will be placed into administrative removal proceedings. So far, ICE agents have arrested more than 300 individuals for administrative immigration violations.

All of those taken into custody during today's operation will be interviewed by ICE agents and Public Health Service officers to determine if they have health, caregiver, or other humanitarian concerns. As a result of those interviews, over 40 individuals have so far been released on humanitarian grounds under supervision, pending future immigration proceedings.

ICE has established a toll-free number that family members can call to obtain information about the custody status and detention location of those detained today. That number is 866-341-3858. Contacts were made this morning to alert local schools, government officials and the Iowa Department of Human Services about the operation.

The men apprehended today initially will be held in housing established for their detention at Estel Hall, in Waterloo, Iowa; women initially will be held at local county jails.

The investigation is being led by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Other agencies assisting today include the United States Marshals Service; United States Postal Inspections Service; Iowa Department of Public Safety; Iowa Department of Transportation; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Federal Protective Service; Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigations; United States Department of Labor; Public Health Service; United States Department of Agriculture; United States Environmental Protection Agency; Iowa Department of Natural Resources; Drug Enforcement Administration; Waterloo Police Department; and the Postville Police Department.

-- ICE --

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

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