

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

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158 arrested in Utah's largest ever ICE-led gang enforcement action

Authorities credit new multi-agency task force for record arrests

SALT LAKE CITY - A total of 158 gang members and individuals with gang ties, including many with prior criminal records, are facing new criminal charges or deportation following a four-month, multi-agency anti-gang surge spearheaded by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) that represents the largest operation of its kind ever carried out in the state.

The arrests are the result of a coordinated effort by the new ICE-HSI-led Operation Community Shield Task Force (OCSTF) made up of personnel from ICE and five local law enforcement agencies, including the Utah County Major Crimes Task Force, and the police departments of South Salt Lake, Midvale, Ogden and St. George. Utah is one of the first ICE-HSI offices in the nation to establish an OCSTF, along with Dallas, Texas; St. Paul, Minn.; and Charlotte, N.C. The aim of the task forces is to leverage ICE's global reach and broad legal authorities with the unique capabilities of other law enforcement agencies to combat the growth and proliferation of transnational criminal street gangs.

At a news conference Thursday morning, the Utah U.S. Attorney, the Special Agent in Charge for ICE-HSI in the Rocky Mountain region, and representatives from the other agencies participating on the task force detailed the results of the operation that involved criminal and administrative immigration arrests in 23 communities statewide, as well as in neighboring West Wendover, Nev.

"This joint operation brings together local and federal resources to target individuals who are in the country illegally and committing crimes in our communities," U.S. Attorney Carlie Christensen said. "The federal cases we are prosecuting as a result of this operation involve individuals who were previously deported and are now back in Utah communities involved in criminal activities. Prosecuting these individuals deters and disrupts gangs and directly and positively impacts the quality of life in our communities. As such, these cases remain a priority for the U.S. Attorney's Office."