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News Releases

NOVEMBER 23, 2010 RICHMOND, VA

Virginia business owners sentenced to 18 months for harboring illegal aliens, forfeit \$1.2 million

RICHMOND, Va. - Two business owners were sentenced on Tuesday to serve 18 months in prison followed by two years probation and forfeit \$1.2 million, for their roles in a scheme to hire and harbor illegal aliens. This sentencing follows an investigation led by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigation (HSI).

"ICE aggressively targets employers who violate immigration laws by knowingly employing an unlawful workforce," said John P. Torres, special agent in charge of the ICE HSI in Washington, D.C. "Companies which profit through a business model that incorporates unlawful workers will be held accountable."

Bao Ping Wang, 44, pleaded guilty to harboring illegal aliens and Trang "Tammy" Lu, 45, pled to misprision of a felony. Hi-Tech Trucking, Inc., a commercial trucking entity established by Wang and Lu for the delivery operations of SeaLands Food, another business operated by Wang and Lu for the distribution of seafood to Asian restaurants and markets throughout the mid-Atlantic region, was sentenced to three years probation for conspiring to harbor illegal aliens.

According to the court record, Hi-Tech Trucking, Inc. agreed to forfeit \$1,225,428 in illegal proceeds gained as a result of the offense and to pay a \$100,000 fine. In addition, Wang was also ordered to pay \$4,000 and agreed to deportation from the United States after service of his sentence. Lu was ordered to pay \$5,000 and agreed that she will comply with programs created by the Department of Homeland Security and Social Security Administration to screen all employees for determining workforce eligibility.

Wang and Lu both managed Hi-Tech Trucking, Inc., and SeaLands Food. From 2006 through 2009, Wang employed a workforce at these companies consisting of both legal and illegal aliens, with Lu's knowledge or reckless disregard of the fact that a number of their employees were illegally present in the country and illegally working without proper authorization. Federal investigators determined that Wang, with Lu's knowledge, harbored and employed between 6 to 24 illegal aliens at these companies at any point in time from 2006 through 2009. Wang and Lu provided housing and meals for the illegal alien employees at three residences that they owned in Richmond, Virginia. Bank records for Hi-Tech Trucking, Inc. accounts from 2006 through 2009 establish that withdrawals from these accounts were used for payments for rental properties for employees and utilities for the three residential properties at which employees were housed, as well as payments to employees, including illegal aliens.

Assisting ICE HSI in the investigation was the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation, and the Henrico Police Department.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

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