



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

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News Release

306 are criminally charged following the ICE enforcement operation in Iowa *Investigation results in largest criminal worksite enforcement operation in U.S.*

WATERLOO, Iowa — A total of 306 people who were originally arrested on administrative immigration charges on Monday at Agriprocessors Inc., in Postville, Iowa, were charged criminally on Thursday. U.S. Attorney Matt M. Dummermuth, Northern District of Iowa, announced the criminal arrest total; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducted the investigation and made the arrests.

“Based on the number of criminal arrests, this is the largest criminal worksite enforcement operation ever in the United States,” said Dummermuth.

Charges in complaints vary by individual and include allegations of aggravated identity theft, falsely using a Social Security number, illegally reentering the United States after being deported, and fraudulently using an alien registration card.

“This has been an unprecedented undertaking in nearly all respects,” Dummermuth said. “Since May 12, ICE agents, other law enforcement partners, and attorneys and support staff from my office have worked literally around the clock to process those administratively arrested in Postville and determine who would face criminal arrest. To have this completed within three days is phenomenal.”

“This operation ran very smoothly thanks to the hard work and coordination of all agencies involved,” said Claude Arnold, special agent in charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Bloomington, Minn. “At the same time, we worked closely with the U.S. Attorney’s Office and with attorneys representing the detainees to ensure detainees’ rights were fully protected.”

Those criminally charged have received court-appointed defense attorneys and have had initial appearances in federal court. Those detained on criminal charges are being held by the U.S. Marshals Service in local jails. Status hearings in the cases have been set for next week at temporary court facilities in Waterloo, Iowa.

Arnold reiterated that Wednesday night was the last night detainees would be housed overnight in Estel Hall in Waterloo. All detainees not arrested on criminal charges will now be held in ICE custody at other locations.

ICE administratively arrested 389 people on immigration charges on May 12. Of those 389, 62 were released on humanitarian grounds and 21 are being held on administrative charges. Eighteen of these 83 are juveniles (aged 13 to 17) who were released to an adult, or were turned over to the Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement. Those who do not face criminal charges will be placed into administrative immigration removal proceedings to be conducted at other locations.

As with any criminal case, a charge is merely an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

In addition to ICE and the U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Iowa, other agencies that worked in the enforcement operation include: the U.S. Marshals Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Iowa Department of Public Safety, the Iowa Department of Transportation, the FBI, Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigations, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Public Health Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the 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.