



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Releases

February 08, 2008

ICE releases final arrest numbers for Utah worksite enforcement operation

Criminal charges may be forthcoming for some illegal aliens

OREM, Utah - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials here announced that 57 illegal aliens were arrested during a worksite enforcement operation conducted Thursday morning at Universal Industrial Sales Inc. (UIS) in Lindon, Utah.

ICE officials forwarded about 30 cases to the Utah County Attorney's Office for possible criminal prosecution for offenses such as aggravated identity theft, forgery and document fraud. The Utah County Attorney's Office is expected to decide which cases to accept for prosecution within a week. Some cases involving individuals who illegally re-entered the country after previous deportation will be presented to the U.S. Attorney's office for potential prosecution. Individuals convicted of this felony face two to 20 years in prison.

ICE agents arrested a total of 57 illegal aliens during yesterday's operation. All were men. The nationalities include: Mexico, 51; Argentina, 2; Uruguay, 2; El Salvador, 1; and Honduras, 1.

During processing of the aliens, which lasted until early this morning, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Wage & Hour Division investigators arrived to ensure those arrested were paid for work they had already performed for UIS before their arrest.

Workers were also interviewed by ICE agents and health professionals with ICE's Division of Immigration Health Services to determine if they had any medical, sole-caregiver, or other humanitarian issues. Representatives from the Utah Health and Human Rights Project and the Utah Division of Child and Family Services were also present during the processing. Ultimately, one man was conditionally released yesterday afternoon for health reasons. He will be required to appear before a federal immigration judge at a later date.

Utah U.S. Attorney Brett L. Tolman yesterday announced the unsealing of two indictments in Salt Lake City that charged UIS and its human resource director with harboring illegal aliens and encouraging or inducing workers to stay in the United States illegally.

The first indictment charged Universal Industrial Sales Inc. of Lindon with 10 counts of harboring illegal aliens, all of whom are or had been employees of the company, knowing or in reckless disregard of the fact that these individuals had come into and remained in the United States in

violation of federal law. The indictment alleges the company concealed, harbored or shielded the workers from detection for commercial advantage.

The second indictment charged Alejandro "Alex" Urrutia-Garcia, 39, of Provo, Utah, with two counts of encouraging or inducing illegal aliens to remain in the United States unlawfully. Urrutia-Garcia, a naturalized U.S. citizen, is the human resources director at Universal Industrial Sales. He was arrested during the Feb. 7 law enforcement action at the company. If convicted, the maximum penalty for the charges in this indictment is 10 years in prison per count. Urrutia-Garcia made an initial appearance in federal court Thursday afternoon.

"These indictments show ICE's commitment to fully investigating companies and their hiring managers who attempt to disregard our laws," said ICE Assistant Secretary Julie L. Myers. "Employers who ignore their responsibilities and the law will be brought to justice."

In fiscal year 2007, ICE made more than 4,900 arrests in connection with worksite enforcement investigations, including 863 involving criminal violations. That represents a 45-fold increase in criminal worksite arrests compared to fiscal year 2001. In addition, ICE obtained more than \$31 million in criminal fines, restitutions and civil judgments in fiscal year 2007 as a result of worksite related enforcement actions.

-- 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.

Last Modified: Friday, February 8, 2008