

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

July 13, 2010 

Washoe County first in Nevada to benefit from ICE strategy to enhance the identification, removal of criminal aliens *Biometrics used to prioritize immigration enforcement actions against convicted criminal aliens*

RENO, Nev. - On Tuesday, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) began using a new biometric information sharing capability in Washoe County that helps federal immigration officials identify aliens, both lawfully and unlawfully present in the United States, who are booked into local law enforcement custody for a crime. The capability is part of Secure Communities, ICE's comprehensive strategy to improve and modernize the identification and removal of criminal aliens from the United States.

Previously, fingerprint-based biometric records taken of individuals charged with a crime and booked into local custody were checked for criminal history information against the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS). Now, through enhanced information sharing between the DOJ and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), that fingerprint information will be automatically checked against both the FBI criminal history records in IAFIS and the biometrics-based immigration records in DHS's Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT).

If fingerprints match those of someone in DHS's biometric system, the new automated process notifies ICE, enabling federal authorities to prioritize immigration enforcement action against individuals who are potentially deportable based on their criminal convictions. Top priority is given to criminal aliens who pose the greatest threat to public safety, such as those convicted of major drug offenses, murder, rape, robbery and kidnapping.

"The Secure Communities strategy provides ICE with an effective tool to identify criminal aliens in local custody," said Secure Communities Executive Director David Venturella. "Enhancing public safety is at the core of ICE's mission. Our goal is to use biometric information sharing to remove criminal aliens, preventing them from being released back into the community, with little or no additional burden on our law enforcement

partners."

With the expansion of Secure Communities to Washoe County, the biometric information sharing capability is now being used in 448 jurisdictions in 25 states. ICE expects to make it available in jurisdictions nationwide by 2013.

"The Washoe County Sheriff's Office, through its relationship with ICE, is continuing its enforcement efforts against criminal aliens," said Washoe County Sheriff Mike Haley. "This effort will aid Washoe County in keeping our community safe from those who would cause us harm."

Since its inception in October 2008, Secure Communities has led to the deportation of more than 9,800 criminal aliens nationwide who had convictions for Level 1 crimes, such as murder, rape and kidnapping. Additionally, the biometric information sharing capability has resulted in the removal of more than 24,800 criminal aliens convicted of Level 2 and 3 crimes, including burglary and serious property crimes, which account for the majority of crimes committed by aliens.

The IDENT system is maintained by DHS's US-VISIT program and IAFIS is maintained by the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS).

"US VISIT is proud to support ICE, helping provide decision makers with comprehensive, reliable information when and where they need it," said US-VISIT Director Robert Mocny. "By enhancing the interoperability of DHS's and the FBI's biometric systems, we are able to give federal, state and local decision makers information that helps them better protect our communities and our nation."

"Under this plan, ICE will be utilizing FBI system enhancements that allow improved information sharing at the state and local law enforcement level based on positive identification of incarcerated criminal aliens," said Daniel D. Roberts, assistant director of the FBI's CJIS Division. "Additionally, ICE and the FBI are working together to take advantage of the strong relationships already forged between the FBI and state and local law enforcement necessary to assist ICE in achieving its goals."

For more information, visit www.ice.gov/secure_communities (http://www.ice.gov/secure_communities/).

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suspicious activity, call 1-866-347-2423.

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