

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

July 20, 2010 

5 sentenced for unlawfully harboring, transporting and employing illegal aliens

FORT SMITH, Ark. - Five Arkansas residents were sentenced Friday for conspiring to harbor, transport and employ illegal aliens, following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents.

Leoncio Amador-Villanueva, 42, was sentenced 18 months in prison and Jose Amador-Villanueva, 39, both of Alma, Ark., was sentenced to 12 months; Juan Amador-Villanueva, 43, of Batesville, Ark., was sentenced to 15 months; and Luis Felipe Martinez, 32, of Lowell, Ark., was sentenced to 30 months. All four were also ordered to serve three years of supervised release following their release from prison. Kelle Stubbs-Amador, 32, of Alma, Ark., was sentenced to time already served and three years probation.

Leoncio Amador-Villanueva, Jose Amador-Villanueva, and Kelle Stubbs-Amador pleaded guilty in October 2009 to conspiracy to harbor, transport, and employ illegal aliens. In addition, Leoncio Amador-Villanueva and Juan Amador-Villanueva entered guilty pleas for money laundering.

Martinez pleaded guilty in December 2009 to causing a financial institution to file a false currency transaction report.

The guilty pleas stemmed from an investigation into the employment and transportation of illegal aliens, as a source of labor for Amador Poultry Contracting and J&A Loading, businesses owned or controlled by the above named defendants. The guilty pleas were based on findings that illegal aliens were knowingly hired by the defendants to work on chicken catching crews, who were transported to various worksites, and were paid in cash.

The defendants were arrested on Sept. 23, 2009, at the time of the execution of search warrants at locations in Alma, Batesville, Lowell, and Springdale, Ark.

In conjunction with these guilty pleas, the individuals agreed to the forfeiture of property totaling more than \$1.2 million in U.S. currency, and real and personal property valued at \$631,000, for a total forfeiture of more than \$1.87 million. The properties were used in the commission of concealing or harboring illegal aliens, were proceeds of the criminal activity or were acquired with profits made from such activity.

"ICE aggressively targets employers who egregiously violate immigration laws by knowingly employing an illegal alien workforce," said Raymond R. Parmer, Jr., ICE special agent in charge of the HSI office in New Orleans. "Businesses that use illegal alien workers to gain an economic advantage over their competition must understand that they will be held accountable for those unlawful practices."

The charges and forfeiture actions are the results of an investigation by ICE HSI agents, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Criminal Division, the Fort Smith Police Department, and the Fayetteville Police Department, with assistance from the Alma Police Department, Arkansas State Police, Pope County Sheriff's Office, Atkins Police Department, Johnson County Sheriff's Office, Lamar Police Department and Arkansas Highway Police.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Tracy Triplett and Matt Wilson.

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

ICE is a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities. For more information, visit www.ICE.gov. To report suspicious activity, call 1-866-347-2423.

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