

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

September 23, 2010 

Los Angeles-area employers criminally charged for hiring illegal aliens

Targeted businesses include Oxnard metal fabricator, Bell employment agency

LOS ANGELES - The owner and a top executive of a metal casting company in Ventura County were arrested Thursday by agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) on federal criminal charges for knowingly hiring undocumented aliens.

Wayne Haddox, 67, owner of Masters in Metal, Inc. in Oxnard, Calif., and his son, Dennis Haddox, 37, who serves as the company's vice president, were taken into custody Thursday morning by ICE HSI agents. As part of the enforcement action, agents also executed a federal search warrant at the business seeking evidence in ICE HSI's ongoing investigation into the company's hiring practices.

Haddox and his son are charged in a criminal complaint with continuing to employ unauthorized aliens. The arrests are the culmination of an investigation that began in 2007 when an ICE HSI audit of Master in Metal's hiring records identified 16 employees who used counterfeit permanent resident alien cards, commonly known as "green cards," to obtain their jobs. According to the case affidavit, after ICE HSI notified the company about the suspicious documents, Master Metals sent a written reply advising the employees in question had been terminated. Subsequently, investigators received information that two of the unauthorized workers had remained on the payroll after Wayne Haddox allegedly directed them to go out and get "good" Social Security numbers.

The defendants are expected to make their initial appearance in federal court Thursday afternoon. The charges carry a maximum penalty of up to six months in prison.

Thursday's enforcement action comes less than two weeks after Los Angeles ICE HSI agents arrested the manager of a Bell, Calif., personnel agency that hires workers for jobs at area customs bonded warehouses. Luis Gasca, 33, who works at Parker Personnel, Inc., was taken into custody Sept. 14. He is accused of hiring undocumented aliens and providing those workers with counterfeit immigration documents to mask their unlawful employment. The charges stem from multi-agency inspections designed to identify security vulnerabilities at the freight forwarding companies and in bond warehouses that play a crucial role in the nation's import-export process. Gasca is currently free on \$20,000 bond.

"As these cases make clear, we intend to hold employers who knowingly hire an illegal workforce accountable for their actions," said Claude Arnold, special agent in charge of ICE HSI in Los Angeles. "Employers who flout the law not only fuel the demand that is responsible for much of the country's illegal immigration, but their actions also hurt lawful workers who are seeking jobs in this challenging economy."

Criminal prosecutions are just one of many tools ICE HSI is using to reduce the demand for illegal employment and protect job opportunities for the nation's lawful workforce. That enforcement strategy also includes expanded use of civil penalties, employer audits and debarment. In the first 10 months of this fiscal year (Oct. 1, 2009 through July 31, 2010), ICE HSI initiated audits of 1,641 employers nationwide, including 78 businesses in the greater Los Angeles area. During that same time frame, ICE issued 172 final fine notices totaling more than \$4 million to employers across the country. Of those, 22 final fine notices totaling more than \$270,000 went to employers in the Southland.

AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 10092469. (Posted 09/24/10)

For more information, visit www.ice.gov.