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NOVEMBER 19, 2010 IDAHO FALLS, ID

ICE arrests 13 convicted criminal aliens, fugitives in eastern Idaho enforcement surge

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho - A total of 13 convicted criminal aliens and immigration fugitives have been arrested following a four-day enforcement operation in eastern Idaho carried out by officers from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO).

During the operation, which ended Friday morning, ICE officers located and took into custody 12 immigration fugitives who had outstanding orders of deportation or had been previously deported and returned to the United States illegally. Ten of those arrested had criminal histories ranging from drug possession, felony assault, counterfeiting and driving under the influence. Three were non-criminal immigration fugitives with outstanding final orders of deportation.

"This multi-day, ICE operation targeted criminal and fugitive aliens throughout eastern Idaho," said ICE Director John Morton. "These surge operations, and our daily targeting of aliens with criminal convictions, are some of the many tools that ICE uses to effectively reduce crime at the street level in communities throughout the United States."

Twelve of those arrested during the operation are from Mexico and one is from Guatemala. The arrests were made in seven Idaho communities including American Falls, Firth, Hamer, Idaho Falls, Lewisville, Shoshone and Sugar City.

Those who have outstanding orders of deportation, or who returned to the United States illegally after being deported, are subject to immediate removal from the country. ICE turned one of those arrested over to the sheriff's department in Bonneville County, Idaho, to face battery charges after it was determined there was an outstanding arrest warrant for him. He has a 2006 felony conviction for third degree assault in Hermiston, Ore.

The four-day surge was conducted by the ICE ERO Office in Boise, Idaho, and was spearheaded by ICE's Fugitive Operations Program, which is responsible for locating, arresting and removing at-large criminal aliens and immigration fugitives. ICE's Fugitive Operations Teams (FOTs) give top priority to cases involving aliens who pose a threat to national security and public safety, including members of transnational street gangs and child sex offenders.

The officers who conducted this week's operation received substantial assistance from ICE's Fugitive Operations Support Center (FOSC) located in Williston, Vt. The FOSC conducted exhaustive database checks on the targeted cases to help ensure the viability of the leads and accuracy of the criminal histories. The FOSC was established in 2006 to improve the integrity of the data available on at large criminal aliens and immigration fugitives nationwide. Since its inception, the FOSC has forwarded more than 550,000 case leads to ICE enforcement personnel in the field.

ICE's Fugitive Operations Program is just one facet of the Department of Homeland Security's broader strategy to heighten the federal government's effectiveness at identifying and removing dangerous criminal aliens from the United States. Other initiatives that figure prominently in this effort are the Criminal Alien Program, Secure Communities and the agency's partnerships with state and local law enforcement agencies under 287(g).

Largely as a result of these initiatives, ICE removed a record 195,772 convicted criminal aliens from the United States in fiscal year 2010.

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