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News Releases

MAY 17, 2011 WEST LIBERTY, IA

First Iowa business partners with ICE, joins 'IMAGE' program

WEST LIBERTY- An Eastern Iowa business on Tuesday became the first in the state to be member of a nationwide program by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to ensure a legal and more secure work force.

Officials with West Liberty Foods LLC and ICE formally agreed on May 17 to partner in the "IMAGE" program. The "ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers" program partnership was sealed during a signing ceremony held at West Liberty Foods' corporate headquarters. IMAGE is a voluntary program that allows private industry to partner with ICE to reduce unauthorized employment and the use of fraudulent identity documents.

"By volunteering to become members of IMAGE, companies large and small can reduce unauthorized employment and the use of fraudulent identity documents," said Mike Feinberg, special agent in charge of ICE's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Bloomington, Minn. "Businesses that join IMAGE also increase the reputation of their brand and their company."

To qualify for IMAGE certification, West Liberty Foods performed the following requirements:

- Conducted self-assessments of their hiring practices to uncover vulnerabilities that could be exploited by illegal aliens;
- Enrolled in employment eligibility verification programs, such as E-Verify and the Social Security Number Verification Service;
- Trained their staff on IMAGE Best Employment Practices and how to use the new screening tools; and
- Underwent a Form I-9 employment eligibility verification audit conducted by ICE.

"The IMAGE program is the best way we can ensure our employees are eligible for employment," said Tara Lindsay, vice president of human resources for West Liberty Foods. "This is an innovative program and represents our commitment to be a leader in the area of hiring and employment practices in our industry and in the state of Iowa."



"While the process to achieve certification was rigorous, the decision to participate in IMAGE was an easy one," Lindsay said. "It demonstrates our commitment to the highest standards of cooperation and compliance with Federal authorities in the hiring of the most stable, secure and fully documented workforce possible."

All IMAGE members must participate in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) E-Verify employment eligibility verification program. Through this program, employers can verify that newly hired employees are eligible to work in the United States. This Internet-based system is available throughout the nation and is free to employers. It provides an automated link to the Social Security Administration database and DHS immigration records.

Upon enrollment in and commitment to the IMAGE Best Employment Practices, program participants are deemed "IMAGE certified," a distinction DHS and ICE believe will become an industry standard. IMAGE also provides free training on the Form I-9, fraudulent document detection, anti-discrimination, and on building a solid immigration compliance model.

West Liberty Foods LLC is a leading processor of sliced meat products in the United States with headquarters in West Liberty, Iowa. For more information, visit www.wlfoods.com (<http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.wlfoods.com/>)

Companies interested in more information on the IMAGE program can call the ICE office in Bloomington at (952) 853-2602 or visit www.ICE.gov/image (<http://www.ice.gov/image/>) .

You may also visit us on [Facebook](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.facebook.com/wwwicegov) (<http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.facebook.com/wwwicegov>) , [Twitter](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://twitter.com/wwwicegov) (<http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://twitter.com/wwwicegov>) and [YouTube](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.youtube.com/wwwicegov) (<http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.youtube.com/wwwicegov>) , or access this news release on your [mobile device](#).

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.