



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

Protecting National Security and Upholding Public Safety

News Releases

July 11, 2007

ICE makes additional criminal arrests at Swift & Company plants

WASHINGTON - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents Tuesday arrested 20 employees of Swift & Company (Swift), one of the nation's largest processors of pork and beef, after executing federal and state warrants in six states. The arrests included a human resources employee, a union official, and current or former Swift employees identified by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) as suspected identity thieves.

"The criminal arrests tied to the Swift case demonstrate how entering the country illegally can serve as a gateway to other crimes including identity theft and document fraud," said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. "We take these crimes seriously and will continue to seek out and arrest those who break the law." ICE agents made the arrests in Marshalltown, Iowa; Grand Island, Neb.; Worthington, Minn.; Greeley, Colo.; Hyrum, Utah; and Cactus, Texas.

Of those apprehended, 18 were arrested for charges relating to identity theft and administrative immigration violations. Chris Lamb, a human resources employee, and Braulio Pereyra, a union official who represents Swift employees, were arrested in Marshalltown and are charged with harboring illegal aliens. Lamb, a 17-year Swift employee, is also charged with misprision of a felony. The charge for harboring illegal aliens carries a five-year maximum prison sentence. The misprision offense is punishable by up to three years in prison.

"Swift is to be commended not only for its cooperation during yesterday's enforcement action, but for its continuing efforts to improve its hiring practices in order to ensure a legal workforce," said ICE Assistant Secretary Julie L. Myers. "The vast majority of companies want to do the right thing. When they do, ICE can focus our resources on the worst of the worst - those who've used stolen identities or aided illegal aliens in using stolen identities and victimized the unsuspecting public."

In addition to the 20 arrests, two Swift supervisors were arrested in Greeley, Colo., for other violations. One of the supervisors was arrested by ICE at the Greeley Swift plant for immigration violations. The other employee was arrested by the Greeley Police Department for an outstanding arrest warrant involving traffic violations.

The latest arrests are the result of a continuing ICE investigation, with assistance from the Federal Trade

Commission, the Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General, four U.S. Attorney's Offices, and two District Attorney's Offices.

Tuesday's criminal arrests came in addition to 1,297 administrative arrests of illegal aliens for immigration violations that were made on Dec. 12, 2006, when agents executed civil search warrants at the six Swift facilities. Subsequently, 274 of those arrested in December were criminally charged for identity theft or use of fraudulent documents.

ICE has dramatically enhanced its efforts to combat the unlawful employment of illegal aliens in the United States since its creation in March 2003. ICE's comprehensive strategy for effective worksite enforcement is aimed at promoting national security, protecting critical infrastructure and ensuring fair labor standards.

Under this new strategy, ICE is targeting unscrupulous employers of illegal aliens, seeking to initiate criminal prosecutions and cause asset forfeitures. ICE believes that the serious nature of these charges on culpable individuals will deter those who may not share the goal of fostering a sound and legal workforce.

The details contained in the complaints are allegations. The defendants are presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

-- ICE --

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

Last Modified: Tuesday, July 17, 2007 Thursday, July 12, 2007