

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: 12/02/2009

ARPAIO: "MINOR TRAFFIC STOPS OFTEN LEAD LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES TO SOLVING BIGGER CRIMES"

Sheriff's Deputies Seize over 1,400 Pounds of Marijuana and Arrest 15 Illegal Aliens in Three Separate Traffic Stops

(Maricopa County, Arizona) Sheriff's deputies today seized over 1,400 pounds of marijuana during two traffic stops near Interstate 10 and 51st Avenue. The traffic stops occurred when the deputies noticed two vans driving erratically. Each van contained over 700 lbs of Marijuana and the drivers of both vehicles are suspected of being in the country illegally.

Deputies also arrested 13 illegal aliens last night during a traffic stop in the North Valley. Of the 13 arrested, two suspects were turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The remaining 11 were booked into the county jail on state human smuggling charges.

Also, the Sheriff's most recent crime suppression operation resulted in the seizure of 700 pounds of marijuana from three U.S. soldiers and the arrests of 37 illegal aliens during these same types of traffic stops.

Sheriff Arpaio stated that the criticism he receives about his deputies pulling people over for broken windshields or burned out tail lights is unwarranted and that recent events prove the enforcement of minor traffic violations often lead to other more serious crimes.

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Sheriff Arpaio referred to the recent shooting of a suspect wanted in the slaying of four Tacoma police officers over the weekend by Seattle Police.

Sheriff Arpaio stated “From what I understand, that officer was conducting a traffic stop of a suspicious vehicle when he came across the murder suspect. What if he decided to bypass the vehicle so he wouldn’t be accused of going after minor traffic violators?”

To date, Sheriff’s deputies have arrested 164 illegal aliens during similar traffic stops since losing their authority to act as federal immigration agents on October 15th of this year. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement has taken custody of 54 of those suspects.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) stated the reason for taking the Sheriff’s law enforcement authority to act as immigration agents away was because of the fact that his crime suppression operations were overbroad and not consistent with the priorities of DHS.

Arpaio says, “Like I said before when the federal government took away my deputies’ authority to act as ICE agents, nothing changes. We will continue to do our job which is keeping the citizens of Maricopa County safe by enforcing all laws, including state and federal immigration laws.”

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