

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: November 17, 2010

SHERIFF JOE ARPAIO LAUNCHES ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION POSSE

SWEARING IN 56 VOLUNTEERS TODAY INCLUDING NATIONALLY KNOWN CELEBRITY CRIME FIGHTERS

(Phoenix, AZ) In July of this year, at the height of the SB1070 controversy when public frustration about illegal immigration was at fever pitch, Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, promised the creation of a new illegal immigration operations posse.

Arpaio said a volunteer armed posse could help his deputies enforce all of the immigration laws. But as importantly, the Sheriff said, his new posse would provide a means by which citizens could feel they are helping in the fight against illegal immigration.

“Law enforcement budgets are being cut and agencies are losing personnel and yet the battle to stop illegal immigration must continue,” Arpaio says. “Arizona is the busiest port of entry for people being smuggled in from Mexico, Latin and South America. So asking for the public’s help in this endeavor makes sense, especially given the success the posses have experienced over the years.”

Since the time Sheriff Arpaio took office in 1993, he has built up the volunteer posse to nearly 3000 members. Today there are 59 different posses operating throughout Maricopa County, all of which have provided critical assistance to his deputies and detention officers.

Each year, the volunteer posse work thousands of hours and they also donate vehicles, planes, helicopters to the Sheriff’s Office as well as a variety of professional services, saving tax payers millions of dollars annually.

The new illegal immigration posse will be the 60th posse.

News Release

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Today 56 new members from various professions will be sworn in by Sheriff Arpaio as illegal immigration fighters including some well known personalities.

Hollywood actors and real life law enforcement professionals Steven Seagal, Lou Ferrigno (The Hulk) and Peter Lupus (Mission Impossible) all signed on to work this detail. A retired Chicago police official aptly named Dick Tracy who now lives in Arizona has also joined this posse. And Wyatt Earp, a local resident whose uncle was the famous lawman, is joining the posse as well.

Seagal and Ferrigno are real life deputies. Seagal, who now lives in the valley, is a sworn deputy in New Orleans, LA. Ferrigno works as a deputy with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office. Ferrigno will be present for the swearing-in ceremony today at 2PM.

“These guys are busy with their acting careers so I don't expect them to be here on duty very often. But they can be instrumental in heightening public awareness of the immigration issue and encouraging others to join the posse's effort to help reduce the flow of illegal immigrants into our communities,” Arpaio said.

Of the others being sworn in today by the Sheriff, many are pilots, attorneys, former law enforcement or military officers, truckers, business owners, computer programmers, financial advisors and real estate experts.

“People from all walks of life have contacted my office saying they want to help me in this fight in some way. This is how they can do that – by being members of a volunteer posse with the specific aim of fighting illegal immigration and lending their particular expertise to the fight,” Arpaio said.

The Sheriff says members of the 60th posse receive several hours of training pursuant to immigration law. Of the 56 members, 33 are qualified to carry weapons already. All will work with deputies in searching for load vehicles and drop houses, transporting illegal immigrants arrested for potential immigration violations, containment of load vehicles or businesses during criminal employment sweeps, and crowd control during demonstrations against the Sheriff's immigration policies.

The Sheriff points out that while his office has done as extraordinary job in the last three years by investigating, arresting or detaining upwards of 42,000 illegal aliens, the additional resources of the volunteer posse will enhance the fight to combat one of the state's more complex and volatile issues.

“My ultimate goal with the creation of this newest posse is to catch and jail as many illegal immigrants coming into this county and to apprehend those who are illegally living and

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working here already,” Arpaio says.

“Let’s face it – my deputies are outnumbered so the more volunteers we can get trained and out on the streets to fight illegal immigration, the better off we will be to fight it.”

Today’s swearing in ceremony will be performed by Sheriff Arpaio and held at 2PM at 2627 South 35th Avenue in Phoenix at the Sheriff’s Training Academy. Media are welcome to attend. END

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