

# Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

## Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: March 4, 2011

### POPULAR ASIAN DINER CHAIN SUBJECT OF IDENTIFICATION THEFT OPERATION BY SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES

**26 ARRESTED SO FAR, MORE ANTICIPATED**

*VICTIMS FED UP AND LINE UP TO  
AID INVESTIGATION SHERIFF SAYS*

(Phoenix, AZ) Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio today says several of his deputies conducted a large scale operation on the popular Asian Diner chain PEI WEI after a months long investigation shows that over 100 employees in Arizona may be using false and stolen identification to secure employment there.

Arpaio says the investigation on the hugely popular restaurant chain began last June after a tip came into his office that several employees were illegal aliens.

Deputies conducted a lengthy records check and surveillance on several restaurant locations and recently were able to determine that of the 800 employees in Arizona, at least 121 of them in Maricopa County appear to have falsified documents, including social security numbers, to secure employment at the business.

Search warrants were served on four restaurants, one in Tempe, two in Phoenix and one in Fountain Hills and the corporate headquarters in North Scottsdale shortly after the opening of business today. 26 employees were taken into custody. More arrests are anticipated later today as deputies have home addresses of suspects for follow up.

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**At the corporate headquarters, boxes of documents and computer data bases were seized. PEI WEI posts that it complies with E verify.**

**There are 19 PEI WEI locations in Arizona. The restaurants are part of the PF Chang's China Bistro Corporation which report consolidated revenues of nearly \$2 billion.**

**Arpaio also says that during the investigation, victims of the identity fraud were contacted by Sheriff's deputies and far in excess of 100 of them indicated they wish to aid in prosecution of those who stole their names, social security numbers or other identification factors.**

**"That's one thing that makes this operation unusual," Arpaio says. "People apparently are fed up with the ID theft problem and the problems ID theft cause and are willing to help law enforcement to insure the successful prosecution of this kind of crime."**

**This investigation shows that most of the victims whose are identities may have been stolen live out of state; eight of them are children under the age of 12 and four of them are deceased.**

**At one of the locations searched this morning, a US citizen eating at the establishment took advantage of the situation, Arpaio says, by promptly applying for a job at the restaurant. Arpaio referred to that news as "gratifying and to the point of why this operations are important."**

**Addresses for the PEI WEI restaurants being served with search warrants today by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office are:**

**Corporate HQ: 7676 East Pinnacle Peak Rd  
PEI WEI at 14835 East Shea Blvd in Fountain Hills  
PEI WEI at 1825 East Guadalupe in Tempe  
PEI WEI at 4340 East Indian School Rd in Phoenix  
PEI WEI at 742 East Glendale in Phoenix**

**END**

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