

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: September 10, 2008

SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES ARREST DOZENS OF ILLEGAL ALIENS AT CHANDLER CANDLE MANUFACTURING COMPANY...

EVIDENCE POINTS TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS SANCTIONS VIOLATIONS

VICTIMS OF IDENTITY THEFT INCLUDE A BUSH WHITE HOUSE STAFF MEMBER

(Phoenix, AZ.) One of the nation's most well known candle manufacturers and a large Chandler area employer was briefly shut down today as Maricopa County Sheriff's deputies, acting on an anonymous tip, raided the plant and arrested a total of 65 persons – 23 for identity theft.

An additional 37 plant employees there were taken into custody for being or working in the U.S. illegally and five (5) U.S. citizens with criminal warrants were also arrested by Sheriff's deputies, according to Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

Search warrants were served on the Gold Canyon Candle Company at 6205 South Arizona Avenue in Chandler this morning. Computers, employment records and other documents were taken from the property as detectives try to determine whether plant managers knowingly hired illegal workers.

Sheriff Arpaio said his office received information in July alleging that several employees at the plant were involved in identity theft, victimizing a number of people by stealing their social security numbers. Sheriff's detectives have verified three victims of identity theft so far including one person who is a Washington D.C. White

News Release

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House staff member working in the Bush administration.

Intelligence given by the informant in the case also revealed that employees and at least one plant manager had escape plans in the event of a raid by immigration or other law enforcement authorities.

Those plans included stalling law enforcement authorities from entering the plant long enough for computers to be shut down.

That information proved accurate as a number of employees this morning either attempted to run from deputies or hide from them inside the plant while others tried to trash their forged identification cards.

At a press conference this afternoon, Maricopa County Attorney Andrew Thomas said, "Given there appears to be evidence that plant workers devised plans to avoid capture or detection by law enforcement authorities for their illegal employment practices, this may be the county's strongest potential employer sanctions case to date."

According to the informant, September marks the start of the company's busy holiday season as it produces and distributes the highly perfumed candles to over 25,000 distributors worldwide. At least 200 people were working in the plant during the execution of search warrants.

"We're coming into the holiday season and this year, especially given the economic climate, U.S. citizens need these jobs, not illegals," Sheriff Arpaio says. "It's high time politicians in Washington and here in our own back yard see the negative impact that illegal immigration has on American citizens." END

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