

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: September 15, 2007

Sheriff's Illegal Immigration Crackdown Expands to Street Food Vendors

Sting Operation Nets Arrests of Eighteen Illegals Selling Contaminated Food

(Phoenix, AZ) In the continuing fight against illegal immigration, Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio sent out his deputies to arrest food vendors violating the law by operating without business permits, and disregarding health code regulations, putting buyers at risk of food borne illnesses.

Sheriff's deputies made arrests of 18 illegal aliens operating street food carts during a Maryvale sting operation aimed at seizing contaminated food vendor carts. All were booked in to the county jail.

Those arrested were selling boiled field corn covered in mayonnaise, cooked in contaminated equipment

The Sheriff's operation was introduced against these illegal food vendors after county health officials unsuccessfully attempted to stop the proliferation of these corn carts, but were run off by the cart operators.

Arpaio, known for his staunch enforcement in all aspects of illegal immigration law, says, "This may be a larger problem than independent operators, and now we must obtain the food source that is placing the public in danger, which may include organized drop houses."

Deputies recently developed information tying these illegal vendor enterprises to suspected area drop houses. The food is prepared by illegals in these drop houses and then sold on the street by illegal immigrants.

Maricopa County Attorney Andrew Thomas says the operation underscores the need for stricter food industry regulations.

News Release

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"Last year my office cracked down last year on dirty dining establishments. Today this joint effort with Sheriff Arpaio aims to further protect public health and safety. Customers of mobile food vendors are entitled to know that the food they're purchasing is safe and properly regulated. A person who buys lunch from a food cart enjoys the same right to healthy food as someone who buys lunch from an upscale restaurant."

Arpaio is requesting more people call the newly implemented immigration hot line @ 602.876.4154 to report this type of activity. Since the hot line opened it has received over 1,800 calls, within more than 50% related to drop houses, illegal employment and day laborers.

Within the next 48 hours, the Sheriff will announce his plan to increase public awareness about the illegal immigration hot line.

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