

# Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

## Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: July 31, 2008

### SHERIFF'S OFFICE TARGETS STREET FOOD VENDORS

#### Non-Permitted Vendors Selling Contaminated Food

*Previous Operation Resulted in Arrests of 15 Illegal Immigrants*

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 7:00 PM**

(*Phoenix, AZ*) Maricopa County Sheriff's deputies in conjunction with the Maricopa Attorney's Office will be conducting enforcement operations later today in the West Phoenix area of Maryvale, aimed at non-permitted vendor carts selling contaminated food products.

Sheriff Joe Arpaio says his deputies are going after these vendors because non-permitted vendors are not in compliance with Maricopa County Health Code regulations by selling unapproved food potentially contaminated with food borne bacteria. They are selling perishable foods not prepared or maintained in compliance with the health code, putting buyers at risk of food borne illnesses.

The Sheriff's introduction into the fight against these illegal food vendors came previously at the request of the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department. Their field operations employees have unsuccessfully attempted to regulate these vendors, but are run off by the cart operators.

After the department appealed to the Sheriff's Office for assistance eradicating the problem, Sheriff Arpaio began enforcement operations to gain compliance with the law.

In a September 14, 2007 operation targeting illegal food vendors, Sheriff's deputies developed intelligence information that a number of these cart businesses were being run by illegal immigrants tied to drop houses in the Maryvale area.

News Release

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In the September operation, eighteen arrests of twenty were individuals found to be in the United States illegally; of that number 15 suspects were non-permitted vendors. As well, one-dozen vending carts were impounded in the enforcement operation.

“These non-permitted food vendors are a serious health risk for anyone who buys their food products,” says Sheriff Arpaio. “I said before that I would continue to monitor the issue and I am.”

Numerous arrests and seizures are expected late this afternoon, Thursday, July 31, 2008.

The Enforcement Support building at 3325 West Durango will be operation headquarters. All arrestees and vendor carts will be taken here for processing. Invited media is welcome to brief with the Sheriff at the operation headquarters at 7:30pm.

Maricopa County Attorney Andrew Thomas is working with the Sheriff’s Office in an operation that underscores the need for stricter food industry regulations. The County Attorney’s Office is prepared to prosecute those who put the public’s health at risk.

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