

# Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

## Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: February 11, 2009

### **SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES EXECUTE SEARCH WARRANTS ON COUNTY VENDOR AS TIP LEADS TO ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION/IDENTITY THEFT ARREST**

#### **60 Illegal Aliens Out of 109 Employees Arrested**

(Phoenix, AZ.) Dozens of county buildings may look neglected over the next several weeks as Sheriff's deputies who, serving a search warrant this morning arrested 60 illegal aliens employed by a landscaping company whose contract was approved by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors to provide services to numerous county facilities.

Forty (40) of the 60 illegal aliens were arrested for identity theft and forgery and 20 others were arrested for immigration violations after deputies determined discrepancies in the social security numbers.

Deputies and volunteer posse personnel took the illegal immigrants into custody on class four felonies this morning after the business was raided. Each person arrested will be held without bond until his trial.

The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors approved the multi million-dollar contract with Handyman Maintenance Inc. (HMI), 2646 South 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Phoenix, to provide landscaping services to buildings including the valley wide court complexes, downtown administration buildings, libraries, jails, garages and the forensic center, buildings which contain sensitive and secure information.

"It's a shame that the county allows illegal aliens to be hired through its procurement process," Arpaio says. "Perhaps the Board should be less interested about this Sheriff incarcerating convicted illegal aliens in Tent City and more concerned about the employment of so many illegal aliens when our own citizens need jobs to feed their families and pay the rent," he added.

**News Release**

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According to Sheriff Joe Arpaio, a tip came in from a former employee of HMI in October 2008. A four-month long investigation shows that at least one field supervisor was aware many workers were illegal aliens. The employee who alerted the Sheriff's Office to the problem was let go by that same supervisor only days after coming forward.

The search warrants seized today will allow deputies to comb through records to analyze the bidding process, employment records, and communications between county officials and HMI supervisors.

"The Mesa case should have served as a warning to other municipalities to closely monitor contracts to ensure government entities are following the law," Arpaio says. "The county should have learned a lesson from that case."

Also at issue, Arpaio says, is the issuance policy regarding county I.D. badges which, the Sheriff says, raises serious safety/security concerns.

The county's contract with HMI is very specific, presumably for safety and security reasons, that all HMI workers wear ID badges while on duty in and around county buildings and personnel. According to the Sheriff's deputies, that policy is routinely ignored.

"There is evidence which suggests that the county violated its own contract," Arpaio added. "No security clearance was done on these employees, no photo IDs were issued, and e-verify requirements were ignored."

The Sheriff's Office investigated the City of Mesa late last year for similar violations. "No one is immune to scrutiny," Arpaio says.

This investigation doesn't end today, Arpaio says. Deputies will be scrutinizing records to be sure this vendor and its illegal immigrant workers aren't providing services to other companies, individuals or municipalities.

Maricopa County Attorney Andrew Thomas had this to say about today's arrests.

"This case represents the continued partnership between County Attorney's Office and the Sheriff's Office in the battle against illegal immigration. In these difficult economic times it is important to make sure legal immigrants and citizens don't see their wages undercut and their jobs vanish because of those in the US illegally."

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