

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: March 18, 2010

ARPAIO ANNOUNCES 14th CRIME SUPPRESSION OPERATION AS HUMAN SMUGGLING ARRESTS HAVE DRAMATICALLY INCREASED THIS YEAR...

*Operation Will Concentrate on Illegal Immigration, Drug Violators, and Other
Crimes*

400 Sworn Deputies and Posse Members Will Participate in Operation

(Phoenix, AZ) Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio today announced a two-day long valley-wide crime suppression operation - the 14th operation of its kind by the sheriff's office- to focus on the growing problem of illegal alien drop houses, drug violators, and load vehicles used to haul illegal alien human cargo into Maricopa County.

According to Arpaio, his office has reported a dramatic increase in the number of human smuggling crimes that they have investigated so far this year. Last year, by March 11, 2009, his office arrested 216 illegal aliens involved in human smuggling crimes. This year, in the same time period of 2010, human smuggling arrests have been reported at 342.

"Either more illegals are coming through this county or we are getting better at apprehending them," Arpaio says.

The sheriff's office has investigated, arrested, or detained over 37,000 illegal aliens while enforcing federal and state immigration laws.

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The Sheriff is mobilizing over 400 personnel, including - for the first time - patrol deputies who are now receiving training to enforce illegal immigration laws, as well as volunteer posse and reserves. Arpaio says this operation will also utilize his air posse and helicopter as more occupants of load vehicles stopped by law enforcement are fleeing the scene of the crime, often avoiding capture.

Many valley communities may see sheriff's deputies working the crime suppression operation.

According to the Sheriff, the 13 previous two-day crime suppression operations netted a total of 728 arrests. Some legal U.S. residents were arrested but of the 728 total arrests, 530 or 72% were later determined to be illegal aliens.

Last week, in a separate human smuggling investigation by the Sheriff's specialized unit, 36 hostages were found crowded for days in a single bedroom inside a Phoenix home with virtually no food or water. Hostages told sheriff's deputies they were routinely threatened by smugglers that they would be killed if family members did not pay the kidnapper's fees.

"Drugs and violence are crimes associated with illegal immigration making the problem even more serious," Arpaio said today.

"I expect we will see more arrests during this operation since my patrol deputies will now join in," Arpaio says.

Arpaio recently ordered that all 900 sworn deputies be properly trained to enforce illegal immigration laws, a move made necessary after the recent decision by Department of Homeland Security to take away the federal authority of 100 deputies, all of whom had been formally trained by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to enforce federal immigration laws.

"They took away the ability of 100 federally trained deputies to enforce immigration laws and so I replaced them with 900 sworn deputies, all of whom are now in a position to enforce illegal immigration laws in Maricopa County," Arpaio said. END

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