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ICE Ramps Up Its Immigration Enforcement Activities

ICE is increasingly focusing its immigration enforcement initiatives on corporations that employ illegal aliens and their officers and managers. On February 28, 2008, five managers of IFCO Systems North America (IFCO) were indicted in federal court in Albany, New York. The indictment alleges the managers were involved in a conspiracy to harbor, encourage and transport illegal aliens within the United States. The charges carry a ten year maximum term of imprisonment. Seven other managers of IFCO previously pled guilty to related charges and are awaiting sentencing. On March 3, 2008, in the U.S. District Court of Grand Rapids, Michigan, three senior executives of Rosenbaum-Cunningham International (RCI) were sentenced to imprisonment for 30, 51, and 120 months, respectively, for harboring illegal aliens and defrauding the government by evading tax payments over 15 million dollars. The ICE operations at IFCO and RCI were nationwide investigations. The IFCO worksite enforcement action was conducted at over 40 plants nationally and resulted in the arrest of nearly 1,200 illegal aliens. A disgruntled employee's call to ICE in February 2005 started the 15 month long investigation. RCI, a cleaning and grounds maintenance service company, had contracts with theme-restaurant chains and hospitality venues throughout the United States. The RCI operation involved arrests at 64 locations in 18 states.

Julie Myers, Assistant Secretary for Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, issued a statement on September 27, 2007, sounding a warning to corporate America: "Worksite enforcement actions target a key component of the illicit structure that enables illegal immigration to flourish. No employer, regardless of industry or location, is immune from complying with the nation's laws. ICE and our law enforcement partners will continue to bring all of our authorities to bear in this fight using criminal charges, asset seizures, administrative arrests and deportations."

Consistent with Ms. Myers' statement, ICE enforcement operations have been conducted in a number of states including Pennsylvania, Ohio, Oregon, Missouri, Massachusetts, Illinois, Maryland, Florida, Colorado, New York, and Kentucky.