

Jan. 31, 2007, 10:22AM

Officials raid Humble plant for illegal immigrants

By KEVIN MORAN

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An immigration raid took place early this morning at the Republic Waste Company on Wilson Road in Humble.

"We're conducting an enforcement action," said Luisa Deason, a spokeswoman with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The business, located near the Will Clayton Parkway, was inaccessible to news reporters this morning. Two buses marked as being with the Department of Homeland Security left the plant at 9:07 a.m.

Because the windows were painted, it was impossible to tell if passengers were aboard the vehicles.

But Joe Rozema, a worker at the plant, said the raid began around 6 a.m. when federal officials arrived and three helicopters began hovering above the building.

"It was quite chaotic this morning," he said.

He said officials had asked everyone to gather in one area of the plant, where they were individually questioned to determine immigration status.

"I showed them my driver's license and my social security card," said Rozema, who has worked at the plant for two years. He said officials gave him a blue plastic bracelet to wear and gave those they determined to be here illegally a yellow bracelet.

He estimated that 30 to 40 people were taken away, and that overall 150 people work at the company.

He said the company had some problems with immigration issues in the past but that he thought they had all been resolved.

"I was really surprised," Rozema said. ``We had a problem here last year around Christmas time (2005) and we got basically all new management."

"The management's doing the best that they can do and I thought everything was kind of cleaned up:" Rozema said.