

Feds charge Wichita fast-food firm over illegal immigrant

The Associated Press

WICHITA -- Prosecutors charged a Wichita firm Wednesday with knowingly hiring an illegal immigrant as manager of one of its McDonald's restaurants, the latest prosecution in a widening federal crackdown in Kansas that aims to make employers accountable for using illegal workers to gain a competitive advantage.

A criminal information filed in federal court charges McCalla Corp. with a felony count of aiding and abetting the use of a false document. The firm operates six McDonald's restaurants in Wichita.

U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom told reporters that a tentative plea agreement has been reached in which the company will pay \$400,000 in fines and forfeitures. He said the company was charged with only one count, but the investigation revealed it knowingly hired numerous illegal immigrants.

"Employment is the primary driving force behind illegal immigration," Grissom said. "I'm calling on all Kansas employers to strengthen their hiring practices and to help us safeguard this nation by hiring and maintaining a lawful workforce."

McCalla Corp. president Roy McCalla said in a statement that corporations are responsible for the acts of their employees. He also said the incident involving the McDonald's manager does not reflect his company's policies.

"This corporation takes seriously its obligation to comply with the law and takes full responsibility for this single isolated incident charged by the government based on the action of one individual who is no longer employed by the company," McCalla said.

The prosecution in Wichita is the second time within two months that a Kansas firm has been charged with knowingly employing illegal immigrants. The other case involved the owners of two hotels, one in Overland Park and another in Kansas City.

Read more here: <http://www.kansascity.com/2012/10/31/3895004/feds-charge-wichita-fast-food.html>