

## ICE Press Release

November 30, 2009

# **Owner, managers and restaurant corporations sentenced for hiring illegal aliens in Mississippi**

## ***First successful prosecution of a Mississippi employer for criminal immigration violations***

Jackson, Miss. - Two corporations and their owner, along with two former managers of Stix Restaurant in Flowood, Mississippi, were sentenced for violating federal criminal immigration laws related to hiring, continuing to employ and harboring illegal aliens following a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) investigation.

U.S. District Court Judge William H. Barbour sentenced Gin Hsing Chen, aka David Chen, former owner of Stix Restaurant in Flowood, Mississippi, to 12 months in prison and one year of supervised release. Chen was also fined \$72,000 and was required to forfeit \$100,000 in lieu of a home he owned in Flowood that was used to house some of the illegal alien employees of Stix Restaurant.

Chen's sister, Shao Li Chen, aka Judy Chen and Judy Wong, a former manager of the local eatery, was sentenced to eight months in prison and two years of supervised release and fined \$5,000 for harboring illegal aliens for the purpose of commercial advantage and private financial gain.

Shao Li Chen's husband, Karl Kwok Hing Wong, another former manager at the Flowood establishment, was sentenced to 12 months and one day in prison and two years of supervised release and fined \$5,000 for harboring illegal aliens.

The two corporations that controlled and operated Stix Restaurant in Flowood, Mississippi, Mt. Fuji Restaurant, a Mississippi corporation, and Flowood Partners, LLC, an Alabama corporation, were sentenced to probation for a term of two years for conspiring to harbor illegal aliens. The corporations also agreed to an immigration compliance program and to forfeit more than \$418,000, which included \$52,017 cash seized at the restaurant, bank accounts used in the crime, and the net equity of the Flowood restaurant property.

Gin Hsing Chen was the owner of Stix Restaurant, while his sister, Shao Li Chen and her husband, Karl Kwok Hing Wong, managed the Flowood eatery. The defendants hired illegal aliens at the Flowood restaurant knowing that such aliens were illegally in the United States, paid illegal alien employees in cash while paying legal employees by check, provided housing to illegal alien employees in apartments leased by the defendants or in a house owned by Gin Hsing Chen, and transported or arranged for transportation of illegal alien employees between the restaurant and employer-provided housing.

Further, the defendants failed to report their illegal alien employees to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security or the Internal Revenue Service as required by law. From May 2006 through March 2008, a total of 23 illegal aliens, then employed at Stix Restaurant, were arrested by ICE agents.

"ICE aggressively targets employers who knowingly and recklessly employ an illegal alien workforce," said Michael A. Holt, special agent in charge of ICE's Office of Investigations in New Orleans. "We will use all our investigative tools to pursue employers who take advantage of illegal labor to make an unlawful profit and gain unfair advantages over businesses which operate within the law."

U.S. Attorney Burkhalter said, "If you knowingly hire illegal aliens, you get to go to jail and pay for that privilege. Employers know better, and if caught and convicted, will have an opportunity to join these defendants."

All three individuals were sentenced to prison and more than \$600,000 were required to be forfeited and paid in fines.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

ICE comprises four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities. For more information, visit [www.ICE.gov](http://www.ICE.gov). To report suspicious activity, call 1-866-347-2423.

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