

Round Rock business indicted for allegedly employing undocumented immigrants

In Round Rock, TX, today, federal authorities arrested Richard Anthony Corrales, 55-year-old President of CORTEC Precision Sheet Metal, Inc., and two others for allegedly employing undocumented aliens announced Robert Pitman, United States Attorney for the Western District of Texas, and Janice Ayala, Special Agent in Charge for Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in San Antonio.

A two-count federal grand jury indictment, unsealed today, charges Corrales, CORTEC, 44-year-old old CORTEC brake operator Leopoldo Yopez, and 42-year-old CORTEC Human Resources Manager Mon Prum Cerda with one count of harboring undocumented aliens and one count of unlawful employment of undocumented aliens.

The indictment alleges that beginning in September 2013, the defendants concealed from law enforcement undocumented aliens employed by CORTEC. According to the indictment, agents with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) supplied the defendants with names of at least 16 undocumented aliens employed at the company and provided the defendants with 10 days notice to provide valid documentation. The indictment further states that in January 2014, the defendants knowingly employed the undocumented aliens after representing to DHS that they had been fired. In June 2014, the defendants informed DHS that many of the positions previously held by the undocumented aliens were still vacant when in fact, they were still employing undocumented aliens.

The defendants face up to ten years in federal prison if convicted of the harboring charge and up to six months in federal prison if convicted of the unlawful employment charge. CORTEC faces fines of up to \$250,000 on the harboring charge and up to \$3,000 for each undocumented alien employed.

“Today's arrest of three employees of the CORTEC Precision Sheet Metal Company comes in the wake of an investigation where these individuals were knowingly hiring an illegal workforce,” said Special Agent in Charge, Janice Ayala, HSI San Antonio. “Investigations of these criminal violations play an important role in HSI's mission. Employers are encouraged to participate in the ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers (IMAGE) Program, an outreach program designed to provide employers with the tools and knowledge that will enable them to hire and maintain a legal workforce.”

These charges and arrests resulted from an investigation conducted by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). Assistant United States Attorney Douglas Gardner is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

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