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Harrington Man Pleads Guilty to Federal Visa Fraud and Harboring, Transporting and Employing Illegal Aliens

Bangor, Maine: United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby announced that **Juan Centeno-Perez**, 48, of Harrington, Maine, pled guilty on November 3, 2009, in U.S. District Court in Bangor, Maine, to Visa Fraud, Transporting and Harboring Illegal Aliens and Conspiracy to Employ Illegal Aliens. Centeno-Perez faces a possible sentence of up to 10 years and a fine of up to \$250,000, or both.

Court records reveal that Centeno-Perez came to Maine originally as a migrant worker in the late 1990's. He eventually opened a Mexican store and restaurant with his wife in Washington County. In 2005, the owner of ISF Trading Co. contracted with Centeno Perez, to provide labor for ISF's sea cucumber processing plant in Lubec, Maine. The entire work force at the plant was provided by Centeno-Perez. Many of the workers employed at ISF were not in the United States legally and were not authorized to work in the United States.

United States Attorney Silsby praised the investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Bruce M. Foucart, special agent-in-charge of Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Office of Investigations in Boston said, "Employers who choose to ignore the law should be on notice that ICE is working diligently to target employers who cultivate illegal workplaces by hiring illegal workers."

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