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News Release

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Prosecutions continue in illegal entry cases involving those with prior criminal records

In the District of Minnesota, court action continued in federal cases involving five Mexican nationals who entered the United States illegally after having been deported as criminals. Earlier today in Minneapolis, one of those defendants pleaded guilty to entering the United States illegally, while two others were sentenced to federal prison. Yesterday, two pleaded guilty to the same charge.

This morning, Alejandro Lopez-Zenteno, age 35, of Rochester, appeared before U.S. District Court Judge Joan N. Ericksen and pleaded guilty to one count of illegal re-entry after deportation. Lopez-Zenteno was indicted on December 21, 2010. In his plea agreement, he admitted that on December 9, 2010, he was found in the U.S. after having been deported to Mexico following a 2002 conviction in the District of Minnesota for possession with intent to distribute cocaine. Following his December 2010 arrest, he was being held in the Olmsted County Jail, where he was identified as an illegal alien through Homeland Security's Criminal Alien Program ("CAP"). The goal of that program is to locate criminal aliens incarcerated in federal and state prisons, as well as in local jails, and prevent them from being released into the general population.

For his crime, Lopez-Zenteno faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Judge Ericksen will determine his sentence at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled. He will remain in custody until the case is resolved.

This case is the result of an investigation by Homeland Security-Enforcement and Removal Operations ("HS-ERO") and the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kimberly M. Hare.

Yesterday, Pedro Contreras-Padilla, age 40, address unknown, appeared before U.S. District Court Judge Richard H. Kyle in St. Paul and pleaded guilty to one count of illegal re-entry after deportation. Contreras-Padilla was indicted on December 21, 2010. In his plea agreement, he admitted that on December 7, 2010, he was found in the U.S. after having been deported to Mexico following a 1994 California conviction for burglary. His December 2010 arrest was for domestic assault, and he was being held in the Hennepin County Jail when he, too, was identified as an illegal alien through the CAP.

For his crime, Contreras-Padilla faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years. Judge Kyle will determine his sentence at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled. Contreras-Padilla will remain in custody until the case is resolved.

This case is the result of an investigation by HS-ERO and the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lola Velazquez-Aguilu.

Enrique Carrion-Nunez, age 33, of South St. Paul, also pleaded guilty yesterday to one count of illegal re-entry after deportation. He appeared before before U.S. District Court Chief Judge Michael J. Davis in Minneapolis. He was indicted on December 7, 2010. In his plea agreement, he admitted that on October 25, 2010, he was found in the U.S. illegally after having been previously deported to Mexico. His deportation followed a 2004 conviction in the District of Minnesota for conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute in excess of 500 grams of cocaine. The current federal case against him resulted from an arrest for domestic violence and violating a protective order in Maplewood. He was identified as an illegal alien through the CAP while being held in the Ramsey County Jail.

For his crime, Carrion-Nunez faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years. He will remain in custody until the case is resolved.

This case is the result of an investigation by HS-ERO and the Maplewood Police Department. It is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Colin P. Johnson.

On January 27, 2010, in St. Paul, Jorge Alvarez-Fuentes, age 29, address unknown, was sentenced by Judge Kyle to 34 months in federal prison on one count of illegal re-entry after deportation. Alvarez-Fuentes was indicted on July 20, 2010, and pleaded guilty on September 20, 2010. In his plea agreement, he admitted that on July 6, 2010, he was found in the U.S. illegally after having been previously deported to Mexico. His deportation followed a 2003 federal conviction in the District of Minnesota for possession with intent to distribute cocaine. The present case against him resulted from his arrest by Minneapolis police, on April 17, 2007, for second-degree possession of cocaine. He was turned over to HS-ERO officials on July 7, 2010, after he completed his State sentence in connection to that charge. He will be deported after serving his federal sentence.

This case was the result of an investigation by the Minneapolis Police Department and HS-ERO. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Andrew S. Dunne.

Also on January 27, Jose Mora-Espinoza, age 39, address unknown, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Donovan W. Frank to 21 months in federal prison on one count of illegal re-entry after deportation. Mora-Espinoza was indicted on July 6, 2010, and pleaded guilty on September 17, 2010. In his plea agreement, he admitted that on May 10, 2010, he was found in

the U.S. illegally after having been previously deported to Mexico. His deportation followed a 1992 Oregon conviction for delivery of a controlled substance. The current federal case against him resulted from a DWI arrest, after which he was identified as an illegal alien through the CAP while being held in the Ramsey County Jail. He will be deported after serving his federal sentence.

This case was the result of an investigation by the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office and HS-ERO. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin S. Ueland.

To learn more about the CAP, visit www.ice.gov/criminal-alien-program/

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