



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Southern District of Mississippi

188 East Capitol Street, Suite 500 601-965-4480
Jackson, Mississippi 39201 FTS 490-4480

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 9, 2009

**HOWARD INDUSTRIES HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER PLEADS
GUILTY TO EMPLOYMENT-RELATED IMMIGRATION CONSPIRACY**

Hattiesburg, Miss - Jose Humberto González, former Human Resources Manager for Howard Industries, Inc., pled guilty today to charges relating to the employment of unlawful aliens at the Howard Industries electrical transformer plant in Laurel, Mississippi, U.S. Attorney Donald R. Burkhalter and Special Agent in Charge Michael A. Holt, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement announced today. González entered his guilty plea before United States District Judge Keith Starrett in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

González pled guilty to a conspiracy spanning eight years during which he knowingly encouraged and induced illegal aliens to reside in the United States, and knowingly concealed, harbored, and shielded illegal aliens from detection. In addition, as alleged in the indictment, González routinely accepted false identification documents in the hiring of illegal aliens and, even after being informed by the Social Security Administration that certain Social Security numbers

did not match the names of job applicants or employees, González nonetheless hired or continued to employ such illegal aliens. González was serving as Human Resources Manager at the Howard Industries transformer manufacturing plant in Laurel when it was the subject of an immigration sweep on August 25, 2008, that resulted in the administrative arrest of nearly 600 illegal aliens who were working at the plant.

González faces up to five years in prison, a maximum fine of \$250,000, and three years of supervised release. He will be sentenced on March 31, 2010, at 10:00 a.m. in Hattiesburg.

"This prosecution is in line with the Department's emphasis on prosecuting employers, not employees. Prosecuting employees is hardly a deterrent to companies bent on ignoring the law," said U.S. Attorney Burkhalter.

Assistant United States Attorneys Gaines Cleveland and Mike Hurst are the prosecutors in charge of the case. Former U.S. Attorney Stan Harris assisted on the case.

U. S. Attorney Burkhalter praised the efforts of Assistant U.S. Attorneys Cleveland and Hurst as well as the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement for its diligent work in the investigation of this matter.

#