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## Sheriff planning crackdown on illegal immigrants

By Jill Redhage  
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A "concentrated crackdown" on illegal immigrants started Friday night in Maricopa County. Sheriff Joe Arpaio announced he's dispatched more than 200 deputies and posse members to saturate valley cities and roadways known to be corridors for human smuggling. East Valley hot spots include Bush Highway, U.S. Highway 60 and "any major highway," said deputy chief Brian Sands.

Arpaio said he's also opening a hotline for tipsters to report suspected illegal immigrants.

Arpaio said the program is comprehensive and controversial, but that it's constitutional.

"We're not going to go out on a street corner and round up people because they look like they're from a foreign country," Arpaio said Friday.

He said it's nothing like Chandler's infamous 1997 "roundup," in which police officers swept the city in search of illegal immigrants.

He added that no one has complained about racial profiling since his deputies began detaining illegal immigrants.

Arpaio said his deputies have already arrested and jailed about 614 illegal immigrants on felony charges since the Arizona law against human smuggling passed in March 2006.

The deputies' strategies for the crackdown aren't necessarily different from those they've been using already to target immigrants who have likely employed a human smuggler to help them enter the country.

But they'll have greater resources and more manpower with which to work.

Deputies will use SWAT, aviation and electronic surveillance, night vision and high-tech weaponry to target vehicles commonly used to move large numbers of illegal immigrants, Arpaio said. If such a vehicle is stopped for speeding, for example, anyone inside the vehicle who's determined by deputies to be an illegal immigrant will be arrested and jailed.

Arpaio stressed the need for probable cause to arrest a suspect. That means a vehicle must have a fake license plate, be speeding, run a red light, or break some other law before deputies can pull over the vehicle and question its occupants.

The crackdown, which has no end date, will utilize 160 deputies and officers who've been trained by federal agents to enforce immigration law.

Of this group, 15 officers will be devoted strictly to the human smuggling unit funded by the state. To fill the personnel void this unit has created in the ranks, the sheriff said his office is recruiting officers from local and national police agencies to join his office through lateral transfers.

To further add to his numbers, the sheriff will deputize 64 federal immigration (ICE) agents on Monday, which will enable them to act as both federal and local law enforcement agents.

"We are quickly becoming a full-fledged anti-illegal immigration agency," Arpaio said.

Arpaio also announced a hotline for citizens to call with information or evidence about illegal immigrants. He plans to advertise the hotline by posting its phone number on the sides of sheriff's trucks.

He is unsure off how his office will be able to use the tips provided. "It's an intelligence gathering tool," Arpaio said.

The hotline number is: (602) 876-4154.

Gary Grado contributed to this report.



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