

NEWS

From the Office of

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Supervisors Extend Illegal Immigrant Inmate Screening Agreement

SAN BERNARDINO – The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors today extended its agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to screen inmates in County jails for immigration violations. Due to the success of the program, the County desires to continue the program for at least three more years.

“Our partnership with federal immigration officials has been an example of how working cooperatively can improve public safety by using our limited resources more efficiently,” said Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt, who received national recognition earlier this year for expanding the program throughout the County. “Our program has resulted in the identification and deportation of thousands of illegal immigrants in our jails.”

On September 20, 2005, Supervisors approved the current agreement with ICE. Upon approval of that agreement, Supervisors also established a team of nine Sheriff’s Custody Specialists to perform immigration screenings of jail inmates. Those specialists attended training conducted by ICE in which they were instructed how to properly identify criminal illegal aliens in the County’s corrections system. Under the program, upon disposition of the criminal case involving a person identified as an illegal alien, the Sheriff’s Department turns the individual over to ICE for possible prosecution on federal immigration violations and/or deportation to their country of origin.

During 2008, 2,359 immigration holds were placed on inmates in the County jail system. So far this year, 2,742 detainees have been placed.

Another benefit to the program is that it better informs the County of costs incurred for housing immigration offenders. Because immigration offenses are federal crimes, costs for incarcerating offenders can be eligible for federal reimbursement. The County received reimbursements totaling \$2,244,462 for fiscal year 2008. The County housed immigration offenders for a total of 263,708 inmate days, which was estimated to cost \$15,822,480.