

McDonald's Franchisee Pleads Guilty

The Department of Justice in its July 16 2008 release announced that one current and one former top executive for a franchisee that owns eleven [11] McDonald's restaurants in and around Reno, Nevada, and the corporation itself pleaded guilty in federal court in Las Vegas to felony immigration offenses for encouraging illegal aliens to reside in the United States. These charges stem from an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) into allegations the company knowingly hired illegal alien workers.

In a hearing in Las Vegas before U.S. District Court Judge James Mahan, attorneys for Mack Associates Inc., which owns the Reno-area McDonald's restaurants, pleaded guilty on behalf of the franchisee to one count of conspiracy to encourage and induce an alien's unlawful residence in the United States and one count of aiding and abetting an alien to remain in the United States, both felony offenses. Joe Gillespie, 53, of Sparks, Nev., the Director of Operations for Mack Associates Inc., also pleaded guilty to one count of aiding and abetting an alien to remain in the United States. Both defendants waived indictment by a federal grand jury and agreed to plead guilty to criminal informations. The government and Mack Associates agreed that the

corporation will pay a \$1 million fine, \$500,000 for each count, and be placed on probation during the period that the fine is outstanding.

The plea agreement details how Mack Associates' management employed individuals they knew were in the country illegally by furnishing them with names and Social Security numbers belonging to other individuals.

In addition, Jimmy Moore, 47, the franchisee's former vice-president, pleaded guilty to one felony count of inducing an illegal alien to remain in the United States. At sentencing, Moore faces a maximum penalty of up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Another defendant in the case, 44, the corporation's controller, has been charged with one misdemeanor count of continuing employment of an unauthorized alien.

"This investigation clearly shows our resolve to pursue those who willfully violate our nation's hiring laws, regardless of their place on the corporate ladder," said Assistant Secretary for ICE Julie L. Myers.