



Illegal Workers Arrested Near Lowe's



Essex, Vermont - November 13, 2008

Work on the 125,000 foot Lowe's store in Essex is running ahead of schedule. But come Friday morning there will be fewer workers here. Five illegal immigrants are being deported thanks to a tip from a citizen.



"I certainly wouldn't say daily, but it's a routine event when we receive information like this, but I can't say twice a month, three times a month, once a week, I don't know," said Deputy Chief Mark Henry, of the U.S. Border Patrol.



Construction workers tell Channel 3 News the five immigrants were drywall workers employed by Kal-Vin Construction out of Hudson, N.H.

All were arrested around 8 a.m. Thursday in a nearby hotel parking lot.



"There's not enough workforce to go around, so I think that's probably why they do what they do. It's all over the country," said Thom Serrani, of Associated General Contractors of Vermont.

Serrani says there have been several documented instances in Vermont in recent years of illegals working on large construction projects-- all employed by out-of-state contractors.



"Vermont construction companies are not doing this. It's someone out there," Serrani said.

The Border Patrol's Swanton Sector includes 295 miles of border in Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York. Arrests of illegal immigrants in the sector are actually on the decline. 1,282 illegal immigrants were arrested in fiscal year 2008-- that's down more than 50 percent from the 2,700 illegals arrested in 2004.

"We credit that to our national Border Patrol strategy. We have tripled the number of agents on the northern border in recent years," Henry said.

Border Patrol agents also arrested 14 illegal construction workers last October near the Lowe's construction site in South Burlington.

In a written statement, Lowe's told Channel 3 News, "All general contractors are required to adhere to all local, state, and federal guidelines. This includes ensuring that

all workers on the project are properly documented."

And the general contractor on this project did require all subcontractors to sign a legal document verifying that all their workers were U.S. citizens.

U.S. Border Patrol officials aren't releasing the immigrants' nationalities, ages, or genders, but all have been turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials for deportation proceedings.

[Keagan Harsha](#) - WCAX News

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