

COURIER 05/13/2008

Postville detainees include Guatemalans, other nationalities, and some juveniles

WATERLOO - Officials with the U.S. Attorney's office in Cedar Rapids said this morning Monday's raid at Agriprocessors in Postville is the largest enforcement operation at a single site in the United States in terms of the number of people administratively arrested.

Most of the administrative arrests in the raid were Guatemalans but included four different nationalities, officials with the U.S. Attorney's office said.

Of the estimated 390 detainees, 290 were Guatemalans and 93 were Mexicans, as well as a handful of Israelis and Ukrainians, officials said.

Of those detainees, 314 were male, 76 were female. Twelve were juveniles, officials said.

Officials said many of the individuals are being held in Estel Hall on the National Cattle congress grounds. Intake processing was occurring at McElroy Auditorium.

An immigration attorney gained was allowed access to the National Cattle Congress grounds late this morning.

Meanwhile Efforts to bring families currently staying in a Catholic church in Postville closer to detained family members and legal aid was underway this morning at El Centro Latinoamericano.

The Guatemalan consulate in Chicago said this morning it is sending two representatives to the center this evening. The Latino resource center is coordinating with area churches and St. Bridget's Catholic Church in Postville to transport people down to shelters in Waterloo.

Also a prayer vigil has been scheduled 6:30 p.m. tonight at Queen of Peace Catholic Church , 320 Mulberry St.

A bank account, called Postville Support Fund, has been set up at Veridian Credit Union benefit detainees and their families.

Read Wednesday's Courier and online updates for more details.