

Perry County, TN: HUMAN TRAFFICKING SPOILED BY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Description

On Wednesday morning, August 7, the Perry County Sheriff's Office received a be-on-lookout (BOLO) for a vehicle with a Texas registration and occupied by several Hispanic males that may have been involved in an armed robbery in Hickman County.

A vehicle matching the description was stopped on Highway 412 East near Sanders Service Center.

Two Hispanic males—Marcos Arelolano Gonzalez and Jose Adolfo Guerra-Garcia—were in the front seats of the vehicle, but officers observed nine other passengers in the rear.

These passengers consisted of one Hispanic 16-year old male, one adult Hispanic female, and seven adult Hispanic males.

Further investigation revealed the driver, the front seat passenger, and the nine other passengers were all undocumented foreign nationals from Mexico and South America.

It was later determined that the driver and front seat passenger were responsible for transporting these illegal aliens, which is in violation of Tennessee State Law.

The two also had in their possession a large sum of currency (both U.S. and foreign) and eight cell phones

The driver and the front seat passenger were charged with nine counts of transporting illegal aliens.

The Sheriff's Office additionally contacted the Memphis Office of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) concerning the matter.

ICE agents later arrived and interviewed the driver and front seat passenger and determined that these two individuals were members of a human trafficking organization believed to have originated in Houston, Texas.

Authorities believe that eight of the nine passengers were destined to become indentured servants in work houses, and the female was to be forced into prostitution.

ICE Agents advised the Sheriff's Office that they would be in contact with the U.S. Attorney's Office about charging the two men with nine federal counts each for human trafficking.

Information obtained from the driver and his passenger may provide federal authorities with significant information concerning a potentially major human trafficking organization operating throughout the United States.

Sheriff Tommy Hickerson said, "I am proud of my officers. Nine individuals may have been saved because of the quick reaction from our law enforcement personnel."