



Fayette County Sheriff's Office

Wayne Hannah, Sheriff

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Press Information

Investigator Brent Rowan – Public Information Officer
brentr@fayettecountyga.gov 770-716-4755

Fayette County Sheriff's Office joins U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Secure Communities Program.

On Tuesday, March 15, 2011, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will begin using a federal information sharing capability in Fayette County that helps federal immigration officials use biometrics to identify aliens, both lawfully and unlawfully present in the United States, who are booked into local law enforcement's custody for a crime. This capability is part of Secure Communities-ICE's comprehensive strategy to improve and modernize the identification and removal of aliens convicted of a crime from the United States.

Prior to the activation of Secure Communities, fingerprint-based biometric records taken of individuals charged with a crime and booked into local custody were checked for criminal history information against the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS). Now, through enhanced information sharing between DOJ and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), biometrics submitted through the state to the FBI will be automatically checked against both the FBI criminal history records in IAFIS and the biometrics-based immigration records in DHS's Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT).

If fingerprints match those of someone in DHS' biometric system, the new automated process notifies ICE. ICE evaluates each case to determine the individual's immigration status and takes appropriate enforcement action. This includes aliens who are in lawful status and those who are present without lawful authority. Once identified through fingerprint matching, ICE will respond with a priority placed on aliens convicted of the most serious crimes first-such as those with convictions for major drug offenses, murder, rape and kidnapping.

"Secure Communities helps improve public safety by enabling ICE to identify and remove criminal aliens more efficiently and effectively from the United States," said Secure Communities Acting Assistant Director Marc Rapp. "As we expand ICE's use of biometric information sharing nationwide, we are helping keep communities secure and ensure the integrity of our immigration system."

With the expansion of the biometric information sharing capability to Fayette Count, ICE is using this capability in 21 Georgia jurisdictions, including all

counties bordering Fayette. Across the country, ICE is using this capability in over 1,100 jurisdictions in 39 states. By 2013, ICE plans to be able to respond nationwide to all fingerprint matches generated through IDENT/IAFIS interoperability.

"The Fayette County Sheriff's Office appreciates the opportunity to participate in the *Secure Communities* Program," said Fayette County Sheriff Wayne Hannah. "This enhanced technology will provide a means for us to possibly identify criminal aliens who may have been released back into the community before. The use of biometric information will more accurately identify an individual as opposed to relying on them to provide us their name and birth date, which could easily be falsified."

Since ICE began using this enhanced information sharing capability in October 2008, immigration officers have removed from the United States more than 67,000 aliens convicted of a crime. ICE does not regard aliens charged with, but not yet convicted of crimes, as "criminal aliens." Instead, a "criminal alien" is an alien convicted of a crime. In accordance with the Immigration and Nationality Act, ICE continues to take action on aliens subject to removal as resources permit.

The IDENT system is maintained by DHS's US-VISIT program and IAFIS is maintained by the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS).

"Under this plan, ICE will be utilizing FBI system enhancements that allow improved information sharing at the state and local law enforcement level based on positive identification of incarcerated criminal aliens," said Daniel D. Roberts, assistant director of the FBI's CJIS Division. "Additionally, ICE and the FBI are working together to take advantage of the strong relationships already forged between the FBI and state and local law enforcement necessary to assist ICE in achieving its goals."

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