

Quarry owners indicted in illegal-alien case

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Body

Two owners of the Blue Mountain Stone quarry near Lyons have been indicted for allegedly harboring illegal aliens.

Abraham and Raul Vasquez were named Tuesday night in a six-count federal grand jury indictment claiming they harbored at least six illegal workers from Mexico to work at their rock quarry near Lyons.

The two own the quarry with their father, Manuel Vasquez, who was not indicted. They were issued felony summonses to appear in U.S. District Court on April 6.

The grand jury indictment came six months after an October pre-dawn raid on the quarry, where federal agents believed more than 50 illegal aliens were living and working.

Six workers were captured during the raid, but federal authorities said they believed others fled into the woods.

Abraham and Raul Vasquez each was charged with one count of harboring an illegal alien for each of the six detained workers.

Joe Greene, head of the Denver office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, said the prosecution marks a turn in INS philosophy in which employers are targeted instead of workers.

"The idea is to dismantle the criminal infrastructure that supports the movement of people into the U.S.," he said.

The October raid was based on a search warrant obtained after INS officials reportedly got a call from the Mexican consul in Denver indicating that workers were possibly being held against their will in filthy conditions and not being paid.

The indictment contains no mention of any of those issues.

If convicted, each brother could face a prison term of up to 10 years on each count and a maximum \$ 250,000 fine on each count.

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