

It's prison for leader of illegal labor ring

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By Bill Dries

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San Antonio, Texas, labor contractor David Cantu Jr. was sentenced Friday to four years in prison for heading a scheme to bring 150 illegal aliens to work on FedEx Corp.'s world headquarters at Hacks Cross and Winchester.

U.S. Dist. Court Judge Hardy Mays also ordered Cantu, owner and managing partner of Brother's Construction II, to pay more than \$860,000 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service and to forfeit another \$10 million.

Asst. U.S. Atty. Linda Nettles Harris said the restitution represents payroll taxes that should have been paid by the illegal workers.

"I think that this sentence sends a message that the use of illegal aliens will not be tolerated," Harris said.

Cantu, who pleaded guilty in December to charges of conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens, money laundering and failure to file payroll taxes, brought 150 illegal aliens to Memphis from October 1998 to April 2000. Cantu also paid the rent on numerous apartments where the aliens stayed.

The men were hired as drywall workers on the \$250 million FedEx construction project.

Cantu told the general contractor on the project that the laborers were independent contractors.

"He did that to evade taxes," Harris said.

A federal investigation began when the Immigration and Naturalization Service raided the construction site and four apartment complexes in February 2000, arresting 180 illegal aliens.

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