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**TWO MEXICAN NATIONALS PLEAD GUILTY TO ILLEGALLY ENTERING THE
UNITED STATES FOLLOWING THEIR DEPORTATION**

CHARLESTON, W. Va. – Two Mexican nationals, who had previously been deported from the United States, pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court to illegally reentering the country.

Isaias Sarabia-Santiago, 28, admitted before United States District Judge John T. Copenhaver, Jr. that he illegally reentered the United States following his deportation because of a felony assault conviction. Isaias Sarabia Santiago, who is scheduled to be sentenced on April 7, 2011, faces up to 20 years in prison and \$250,000 fine.

The conviction stems from a traffic stop conducted by the West Virginia State Police on September 14, 2010. Troopers stopped a car on the West Virginia Turnpike for running a toll booth near Beckley, West Virginia. Sarabia-Santiago, a passenger in the car, admitted to being in the United States illegally. Troopers then notified agents with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Agents later learned that Sarabia-Santiago had been previously removed from the United States by ICE, and he had come back from Mexico without permission. Sarabia-Santiago was previously convicted in North Carolina for assaulting a person with a firearm and inflicting serious bodily injury.

The West Virginia State Police and ICE conducted the investigation.

In an unrelated case, Jose Rico-Alcala, 41, also of Mexico, pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Thomas E. Johnston to illegally reentering the United States. Following his guilty plea, Rico-Alcala was immediately sentenced by the Court to credit for time served and was handed over to ICE agents to conduct deportation proceedings.

On October 7, 2010, Rico-Alcala was a passenger in a car stopped on I-64 in South Charleston, West Virginia by officers with the South Charleston Police Department. Rico-Alcala, who admitted to being in the United States illegally, was subsequently transferred to the custody of ICE agents. Agents learned that Rico-Alcala had been previously deported from the United States back to Mexico in 2006 and again in 2010. Rico-Alcala admitted to reentering the United States without permission on both occasions.

The South Charleston Police Department and ICE jointly conducted the investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Erik S. Goes handled both cases.

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