



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ANOTHER MEXICAN NATIONAL SENTENCED IN NACO, ARIZ. DRUG TUNNEL CASE

Defendant had been extradited from Mexico to stand trial

TUCSON, Ariz. - Ruben Ultreras-Estrada, 39, of Naco, Sonora, Mexico, extradited to the U.S. in May 2006 to face trial for cocaine charges related to the Naco, Ariz. drug tunnel, was sentenced here today by U.S. District Chief Judge John M. Roll to 25 years in prison. Over 20 tons of cocaine had been smuggled through the tunnel from its inception in 1996 until May 1999 when the tunnel was discovered. Ultreras-Estrada and co-defendant Francisco Valle-Hurtado, also of Naco, were convicted in November 2007 of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute 17,715 pounds of cocaine.

The investigation began after the seizure of 5.6 tons of cocaine from a warehouse in Tucson in December 1996. During the course of the investigation an additional 2660 pounds of cocaine, three fully automatic machine guns and 1.5 million in cash were seized. Over fifty people connected to the Naco tunnel have been convicted; five remain at large. Valle-Hurtado, also extradited to the U.S. in May 2006, was sentenced to 25 years in prison on May 29, 2008.

The investigation leading to the conviction was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Arizona Department of Public Safety. The prosecution was handled by James T. Lacey, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR-99-759-TUC-JMR
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-172(Ultreras-Estrada)

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