

## **ICE Deports Mexican Murder Suspect in Grays Harbor Custody**

### **Local News**

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MONTESANO, Wash. - A 36-year-old Mexican national wanted in his native country for murder was removed Wednesday by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) officers. Rigoberto Puga-De La Rosa was transported from the Seattle area by an ICE Air Operations charter flight to San Diego, Calif., where he was turned over to Mexican officials at the Otay Mesa border crossing. Puga-De La Rosa was taken into custody by ICE ERO Criminal Alien Program officers at the Greys Harbor County Jail in August and placed in removal proceedings following his release by local authorities. He was in local custody on [state charges](#). Records checks by ICE ERO at that time indicated Puga-De La Rosa might be a suspect in a homicide committed in the Mexican state of Jalisco. Los Angeles-based representatives from the Mexican Attorney General's Office subsequently confirmed there was an outstanding 2003 warrant for his arrest on charges of first degree murder. Mexican authorities requested the U.S. government's assistance in returning Puga-De La Rosa to face charges. Earlier this month, Puga-De La Rosa was order deported by an immigration judge, paving the way for his repatriation to Mexico Wednesday. "ICE's top immigration enforcement priority is to protect the public from criminal aliens," said Bryan Wilcox, acting field office director for ERO Seattle. "Had it not been for ICE ERO officers working cooperatively with local jail authorities to screen inmates for immigration violations, this dangerous murder suspect would have been set free."

Puga-De La Rosa was held by ICE at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma pending his removal. ERO's Criminal Alien Program identifies potentially deportable aliens incarcerated in jails and prisons throughout the United States. CAP officers interview and review inmates' biographical information. Although ERO initiates removal proceedings against criminal aliens through the CAP, these individuals may remain in prison or jail to complete their criminal hearings or sentences. Under CAP, ERO uses a risk-based approach to make determinations about the detention and arrest of criminal aliens, with priority given to cases involving individuals deemed to be a security or public safety threat. Since Oct. 1, 2009, ERO has removed more than 500 foreign fugitives from the United States who were being sought in their native countries for serious crimes, including kidnapping, rape and murder. ERO works with ICE's Office of International Affairs, foreign consular offices in the United States, and Interpol to identify foreign fugitives illegally present in the country.