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CBP Officers Seize \$500K Found in Spare Tire, Laundry Detergent Box during Outbound Enforcement Operation

03/02/2009

Hidalgo, Texas – U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers working outbound enforcement operations at the Hidalgo/Reynosa International Bridge, southbound lanes, seized \$561,132 in undeclared bulk currency.

On March 1, at 5 p.m., CBP officers working outbound enforcement operations at the Reynosa/Hidalgo International Bridge came in contact with a southbound 2007 Jeep Cherokee SUV prior to it departing the United States to enter Mexico. After a routine examination, the vehicle and driver were referred to secondary for an intensive examination. While in secondary, officers noted discrepancies to the vehicle's spare tire and to a box of laundry detergent.



A non-intrusive image scan revealed anomalies within the suspected areas. While conducting an intensive examination of the vehicle, officers found 26



undeclared currency packages concealed in the spare tire and eight additional currency packages in a box of laundry detergent. The 39-year-old, Mexican citizen from General Escobedo, Nuevo Leon, Mexico was not immediately arrested. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents continue to investigate this failed smuggling attempt. The Jeep Cherokee and the U.S. currency were seized by CBP officers.

Michael R. DeBruhl, CBP acting port director, Hidalgo/Pharr said, "For this year, this is the largest amount of undeclared bulk currency seized during an outbound operation at the Hidalgo/Reynosa International Bridge." DeBruhl further said, "In years past, my officers have seized currency found hidden in detergent boxes."

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

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