

Nogales Police Department

Who is in charge: Derek Arnson.

Where he stands: “I know the value of immigrants and what they bring to this country. I also know the value of secure borders.”

How it’s documented: Classifies most referrals and assists to immigration authorities as “other agency assists,” “UDAs,” and “Border Patrol assist.” Cases where the person wasn’t cited or given a warning are only documented in the call notes.

What the Star reviewed: Reviewed incident reports for all three categories for three-year period and documented specific-case related information for all except “other agency assist” reports.



Derek Arnson

Overview

Sworn officers: 65

Total immigration-related incidents since SB 1070 took effect: 271

Share of total incidents: 6%

Findings

- Nogales is one of many Southern Arizona agencies to participate in Operation Stonegarden, a Department of Homeland Security grant program that pays overtime to officers working on border-related tasks. At least 65 of the department’s immigration-related cases since the status-check requirement took effect were related to that program. Officers working Stonegarden shifts often did “security checks” in areas near the border that have been associated with smuggling.
- Nogales regularly cooperated with undercover Border Patrol agents. When agents in plain clothes would do a house call, they would often enlist a uniformed officer to knock on the door.
- A relatively high proportion of immigration-related incidents in Nogales involved pedestrians. About 1 in 5 people Nogales police referred to Border Patrol in the first eight months of 2013 were stopped by an officer while they were walking.
- Police regularly referred people they encountered in a McDonald’s restaurant inside the Walmart Supercenter, and often paid visits to hotels suspected of housing recent border crossers.