

## S.C. drug bust reveals identity theft ring

by UPI

COLUMBIA, S.C. - Authorities in Lexington County, S.C., recently discovered an identity theft ring involving counterfeit social security cards during a major drug bust.

Area authorities said while they were seizing 11 pounds of cocaine in January, they discovered the counterfeiting ring and have since linked it to nearly 20 members of a Mexican family, the Raleigh (N.C.) News & Observer said Monday.

The investigation was launched after counterfeiting documents were found in the Lexington County home of two illegal immigrants arrested in a drug bust.

Federal records show that the growing investigation also involves a "financial investigation" and includes illegal firearm possession charges.

As the investigation grew, federal groups such as the Drug Enforcement Administration and Customs Enforcement were brought in to aid local officials.

Indictments have focused around illegal immigrants who use the counterfeit Social Security cards and numbers to gain employment in the area, the News & Observer said.

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