

E-Verify debate rages on Springfield News-Leader (Missouri) January 15, 2012 Sunday

Though outside city limits, her company would still be required to do E-Verify checks, according to the proposed ordinance.

Vickers notes the new law, if approved, would have no impact on Dale's Roofing because the company also does the checking.

"We already use E-Verify and have for about a year," she said. "We have been doing some jobs for school districts, and they prefer that we do it."

Vickers acknowledged there's a perception that roofing companies hire **illegal** workers, but she was adamant that neither her company nor its subcontractors do.

"Anybody of Mexican descent seems to fall into that category," she said. "We understand the frustration of some people but all of our subs have been with us for six years. We know them."

At Liberty Moving and Storage, owner Todd Magness said he is half of a two-person operation and worries an E-Verify mandate would be an unnecessary cost he might have to bear.

"We're small enough we don't even have a credit card machine, to save money," he said.

"Some bigger companies have an HR department, but we don't. I would vote 'no' on this. I'm concerned about the addition of regulations, hoops and the money it will cost me to become compliant."

Joe Jenkins, customer service manager at Jenkins Diesel Power, Inc., said his company already uses E-Verify for new employees.

"The last time we hired someone it was a five-minute process and it was free," he said. "It's one more tool we can use, and it's a lot less invasive than the drug testing and driver's license checks we do."

He said he knows the government's E-Verify program, operated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, isn't perfect.

A 2010 Westat study found that E-Verify approved 3.3 percent of workers who were ineligible for employment in the U.S..

Critics note that E-Verify has difficulty identifying counterfeit, stolen or borrowed identity documents.

But Jenkins said he believes the program is "good enough" to continue to use.

However, he said he plans to vote against the E-Verify measure in Springfield because parts of it likely will be declared illegal.

City Attorney Dan Wichmer believes a provision that requires fines for Springfield employers that don't use E-Verify or hire illegal workers already conflicts with federal law.

"It may cause litigation for the city, and for that reason I plan to vote against it," Jenkins said.

Illegal document ring busted in St. Joseph

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