



NEWS RELEASE

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**THREE MORE INDICTED IN BATON ROUGE ON
FEDERAL FEMA FRAUD CHARGES**

United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced that on November 10, 2005, a federal grand jury returned indictments against three more Louisiana residents who applied for FEMA relief funds.

REGAN J. BENNIE, age 25, and CHERI A. WHITAKER age 25, residents of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, were each charged in two-count indictments with making false and fraudulent claims for disaster assistance benefits and with making false and fraudulent statements to FEMA. ROSALIND E. DAVISON, age 45, a resident of Baton Rouge, was charged in a two-count indictment – in Count One with making a false and fraudulent claim for her own disaster assistance benefits from FEMA and in Count Two with making a fraudulent claim for another with FEMA.

The charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General. These three individuals bring the total

to eleven defendants who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to FEMA relief funds.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate, and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud, and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force – chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division – includes members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Postal Inspector’s Office, and the Executive Office of the United States Attorneys, among others.

If convicted, these defendants face a maximum of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

NOTE: An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by the defendants. The defendants, of course, are presumed innocent until and unless they are proven guilty at trial.

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