



**Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas**

Donald J. DeGabrielle, Jr. • United States Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, JUNE 05, 2006
WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/TXS

JOHN YEMBRICK
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(713) 567-9388

**HOUSTON RESIDENT INDICTED FOR DEFRAUDING FEMA
OF \$36,000 IN HURRICANE DISASTER FUNDS**

HOUSTON, TX – A federal grand jury returned a 22-count indictment charging Michael James Green, 25, of Houston, Texas, with fraudulently obtaining thousands of dollars in Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita disaster assistance, United States Attorney Don DeGabrielle announced today.

Green, who was taken into federal custody this morning by special agents of the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, appeared before a United States Magistrate Judge and has been ordered held without bond pending a detention hearing scheduled for Thursday, June 8, 2006 at 10:00 a.m.

The indictment returned on May 30, 2006, charges Green with three counts of wire fraud, fifteen counts of mail fraud and four counts of aggravated identity theft.

Green is accused of filing 18 separate fraudulent applications for disaster assistance, using 18 different social security numbers and 18 unique "damaged addresses" in New Orleans, Louisiana, Lake Charles, Louisiana and Beaumont, Texas, claiming to have resided at each address during the landfall of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In each of Green's applications, it is alleged he falsely claimed that the storms caused him to lose work or become unemployed, and that in all but one of his applications he falsely stated that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita left him with an essential need for food, clothing and shelter. Based upon Green's fraudulent applications to FEMA, the Department of Treasury sent Green 18 separate \$2,000 payments in expedited disaster assistance.

In response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, FEMA provided eligible households with an expedited payment of \$2,000 to assist victims with immediate food, shelter and clothing needs, with additional rental assistance payments to be made over time. To qualify for the emergency assistance, the damaged home in the disaster area must be where the applicant usually resided and where the applicant was residing at the time of the disaster.

If convicted, Green faces a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment, without parole, and a \$250,000 fine for each of the wire fraud and mail fraud counts. The aggravated identity theft counts each carry a mandatory consecutive sentence of two (2) years of imprisonment.

With the return of this indictment, 21 individuals have been charged in total in the Southern District of Texas with fraud relating to Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas is a member of the Department of Justice's Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, created by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales to deter, detect and prosecute unscrupulous individuals who try to take advantage of the Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita disasters. Headed by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher, the Task Force is comprised of federal, state, and local law enforcement investigating agencies and the United States Attorney's Offices in the Gulf Coast region and nationwide.

This case was jointly investigated by the General Accounting Office, the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, and the United States Postal Inspection Service, with assistance from the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General and the Small Business Administration Office of Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant United States Attorney Jason Varnado.

Anyone suspecting criminal activity involving disaster assistance programs can make an anonymous report by calling the toll-free Hurricane Relief Fraud Hotline, 1-866-720-5721, 24 hours a day, seven days a week until further notice. Information can also be emailed to the inspector general at dhsoighotline@dhs.gov or sent by surface mail, with as many details as possible, to:

Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC. 20528
Attn: Office of Inspector General, Hotline

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

###