



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Dunn Lampton Southern District of Mississippi

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ANOTHER PERSON SENTENCED FOR KATRINA FRAUD

Jackson, Mississippi - United States Attorney Dunn Lampton announced that **Tabuthia Bell**, of Ridgeland, Mississippi, pled guilty and was sentenced today for theft of government funds in connection with submitting a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds. Bell received \$2,000 from FEMA by providing a false address in Ridgeland, Mississippi, and claiming hurricane damage at that address.

United States District Judge Henry T. Wingate sentenced Bell to three years of probation with forty hours of community service. Bell has already made full restitution to FEMA.

In September, 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the national 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 for the Criminal Division, Alice S. Fisher, includes members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, the Postal Inspector's Office and the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, among others.

Pursuant to the Justice Department initiative, a local Katrina Fraud Task Force, consisting of over 20 Federal and State law enforcement agencies, was formed in the Southern District of Mississippi to pursue and prosecute individuals who engage in fraud associated with the hurricanes.

If anyone has information concerning possible fraud being committed during the post-Katrina recovery effort, please call either the DHS-OIG Fraud Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or the FBI Fraud Hotline at 1-800-225-5324.

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