



Department of Justice

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ANOTHER PLEADS GUILTY IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON DISASTER RELIEF FRAUD CHARGES

BATON ROUGE, LA – Another Louisiana resident pled guilty in federal court on fraud charges related to a hurricane disaster relief program, United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced today.

CLARENA M. McGEE, age 56, of Fluker, Louisiana, pled guilty today before Senior U.S. District Court Judge Frank J. Polozola to Count One of an indictment charging her with wire fraud. The indictment alleges that McGEE defrauded the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Louisiana Department of Labor by filing an application for unemployment assistance using the name and Social Security number of another individual. Fraudulently posing as this other individual, the defendant is alleged to have received more than \$7,700 in benefits to which she was not entitled. The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General. As a result of her guilty plea to Count One, McGEE faces a maximum sentence of twenty (20) years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. As part of the plea agreement, the U.S. Attorney's Office will dismiss Count Two of the indictment when McGEE is sentenced on Count One.

The number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds stands at one hundred twenty-nine.

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 the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys and others.

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443. 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 Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force at HKFTF@leo.gov or sent by surface mail, with as many details as possible, to Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4909.

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