



# Department of Justice

## United States Attorney Dunn Lampton Southern District of Mississippi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2007  
[www.usdoj.gov/usao/mss](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mss)

CONTACT: SHEILA WILBANKS  
PHONE: (601) 965-4480  
FAX: (601) 965-4409

### **JACKSON COUNTY MAN FOUND GUILTY OF KATRINA FRAUD**

GULFPORT, Miss - Danny Gene Hale, of Pascagoula, Mississippi was found guilty in U.S. District Court on Wednesday of six counts of fraud against the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Attorney Dunn Lampton announced today. Hale was remanded into the custody of the U.S. Marshal immediately after the verdict.

Hale was found guilty of making a false statement to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, filing a false claim with FEMA, theft of government funds by fraudulently obtaining FEMA assistance, and three counts of mail fraud. According to the indictment, Hale received \$11,000.04, from FEMA by utilizing an address where he no longer lived, and claiming hurricane damage at that address. At the time Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Hale was in federal custody on forged money order charges and was not released until December 2005.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Annette Williams was the prosecutor in this case, which was investigated by Charles Thompson of the United States Postal Inspection Service. Hale is scheduled to be sentenced before U.S. District Judge Louis Guirola on December 4, 2007. The maximum sentence is 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

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.

###