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DALLAS, TEXAS
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**Dallas Woman Arrested on Theft of Public Money
and Identity Theft Charges in FEMA Fraud Scheme**

Defendant Received Approximately \$65,000 in Hurricane Disaster Benefits

United States Attorney Richard B. Roper announced that Lakietha Hall was arrested this morning by federal authorities in Dallas on charges outlined in a federal criminal complaint filed on December 16, 2005 and unsealed this afternoon. The complaint charges Hall with knowingly and willfully stealing money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and knowingly using, without lawful authority, the means of identification of another person during and in relation to a felony, that is, the theft of public funds. A search warrant was also executed this morning at Hall's residence and more than \$10,000 in cash was seized.

Hall, age 35, made her initial appearance in federal Court this afternoon before the Honorable Paul D. Stickney, United States Magistrate Judge, who released her on bond with conditions.

According to the affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint and search warrant, Lakietha Hall made numerous fraudulent claims for hurricane disaster relief. As part of her scheme, Hall would file the fraudulent claims over the telephone and online with FEMA and the Louisiana Department of Labor by using the identities, including the names and social security numbers, of other persons without their knowledge or consent. Hall would often use the identities of other persons with the surname "Hall." Hall would provide FEMA and the Louisiana Department of Labor with a mailing address that she controlled. Hall has received approximately \$65,000 in fraudulently obtained Hurricane Katrina disaster benefits and there is no evidence to indicate that Lakietha Hall has ever lived in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Daniel S. Cortez, U.S. Postal Inspector In Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Fort Worth Division, said, "The mission of the United States Postal Inspection Service is to protect the nation's mail system from criminal misuse. Any type of fraud especially charity, identity theft, insurance and government -- related to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are a priority for the Postal Inspection Service. When a case is identified our agency will move quickly to disrupt the criminal activity perpetrated through this type of mail fraud scheme."

Gordon S. Heddell, Inspector General, Department of Labor, said, "Fraud schemes in the programs that assist the victims of the natural disasters are unconscionable. This case demonstrates the commitment of federal law enforcement and state workforce agencies to work together to protect these programs from fraud. We will continue to work closely with our state and federal partners to uncover identity theft schemes and fraud in the unemployment insurance system."

U.S. Attorney Roper praised the investigative efforts of the Department of Labor - Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General and the Louisiana Department of Labor. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Tammy Reno.

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