



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney John M. Dowdy, Jr.
Southern District of Mississippi**

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**GREENE COUNTY SUPERVISOR SENTENCED TO 78 MONTHS IN PRISON
ON BRIBERY AND OTHER CHARGES RELATED TO KATRINA DEBRIS
REMOVAL CONTRACTS**

Hattiesburg, Miss. – Earnest Holder, District III Supervisor of Greene County, Mississippi, was sentenced to 78 months in prison, ordered to pay a \$125,000.00 fine and \$18,480.00 in Restitution and 3 years of supervised release following his release from prison, U.S. Attorney John Dowdy announced. Holder was convicted in April of this years of bribery, conspiracy to commit bribery, and perjury before a federal grand jury. U.S. District Judge Keith Starrett imposed the sentence earlier today in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

The evidence at trial showed that Holder voted to award county contracts in his district in Greene County, Mississippi to a particular company. The contracts were funded by FEMA. Holder awarded those contracts to that company, knowing in advance that the owner of the company had agreed to pay Holder illegal cash kick-backs in exchange for being awarded the contracts. Holder was also convicted by a jury in federal court in August of 2010 of filing false income tax returns.

“All public officials who choose to sell their office in a corrupt manner should heed this sentence as a clear warning” said U.S. Attorney Dowdy. “We will continue to pursue and prosecute corrupt public officials to the fullest extent of the law. I also want to commend the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, and particularly Stacey Pickering and the Mississippi State Auditor’s Office for their assistance in this case” Dowdy said. Assistant U.S. Attorney Ruth Morgan was lead prosecutor.

In September, 2005, former 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, Lanny A. Breuer, includes members from the FBI, Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, 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 postKatrina 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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