



Department of Justice

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GULFPORT MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR KATRINA FRAUD

GULFPORT, Miss. – Lance Tovslund, of Gulfport, Miss., was sentenced to 10 months in federal prison in U.S. District Court today for fraud against the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Acting U.S. Attorney Stan Harris announced today. Tovslund, who earlier pled guilty to submitting a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, was sentenced by District Judge Louis Guirola, Jr., to serve 3 years of post release supervision after his prison term and make restitution of \$5,864.00 to FEMA. Tovslund faced a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

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 Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, Rita M. Galvin, 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 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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