



Department of Justice

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EX-LUMBERTON POLICE CHIEF CONVICTION AFFIRMED ON APPEAL

JACKSON, Miss. – The conviction and sentence of Maurice Hammond, the former Chief of Police for the City of Lumberton, was affirmed by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit this week, U. S. Attorney Donald R. Burkhalter announced. The appeal followed a week long trial in which Hammond was convicted by a jury for making false claims to FEMA, false statements to FEMA and the Small Business Administration, and wire fraud in applying for and receiving Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds.

At the time of Hurricane Katrina, Maurice Hammond was a police officer with the City of Poplarville. He was the Chief of Police of Lumberton at the time of his indictment in November, 2008. The proof presented to the jury by Assistant United States Attorneys Annette Williams and Kiana Foster, revealed Hammond received over \$19,000 plus a FEMA travel trailer by claiming he was living in a house he had purchased in Poplarville, but to which he had no water or electric service. The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and the Small Business Administration Office of Inspector General.

At the sentencing hearing on August 13, 2009, Judge Louis Guirola, Jr. stated that Hammond had violated the trust of both the public he was to serve and the law enforcement community. He sentenced Hammond to 30 months in prison and ordered him to make restitution to FEMA of \$29,438, which included the cost to set up and maintain the FEMA travel trailer he wrongfully received. Hammond was ordered to serve 3 years of supervised release after his prison term.

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 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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