



NEWS RELEASE

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**TWO MORE ARRESTED IN BATON ROUGE ON
FEDERAL FEMA FRAUD CHARGES**

United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced that on October 27, 2005, a federal grand jury returned indictments against two more Louisiana residents who applied for FEMA relief funds.

MORRIS M. BATES, age 25, and EDDIE G. CONERLY, age 51, both residents of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, were each charged in two-count indictments with making false and fraudulent claims for disaster assistance benefits and with making false and fraudulent statements to FEMA.

The arrests resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General. These two individuals bring the total to eight defendants who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to FEMA relief funds.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the 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 Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division – includes members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Postal Inspector's Office, and the Executive Office of the United States Attorneys, among others.

If convicted, these defendants face a maximum of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

NOTE: An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by the defendants. A bill of information is merely an accusation by the United States Attorney that offenses have been committed by the defendant. The defendants, of course, are presumed innocent until and unless they are proven guilty at trial.

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