



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2006
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ANOTHER SENTENCED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON FEDERAL FEMA FRAUD CHARGE

BATON ROUGE, LA – Another Louisiana resident was sentenced in federal court by U.S. District Court Judge Frank J. Polozola on a fraud charge related to a hurricane disaster relief program, United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced today.

MONIQUE C. PRESTON, age 25, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, pled guilty on June 12, 2006, to Count One of an indictment charging her with making a false claim for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance benefits. PRESTON was sentenced to three years of probation, fifty hours of community service, and \$2,000 in restitution. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General; and the Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted the investigation of this matter.

The number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds stands at seventy-four.

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 the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys and others.

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443. Anyone suspecting criminal activity involving disaster assistance programs can make an anonymous report by calling the toll-free Hurricane Relief Fraud Hotline, 1-866-720-5721, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until further notice. Information can also be emailed to the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force at HKFTF@leo.gov or sent by surface mail, with as many details as possible, to Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4909.

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