



**Department of Justice**  
**United States Attorney David R. Dugas**  
**Middle District of Louisiana**

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**TWO MORE PLEAD GUILTY IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA,**  
**TO DISASTER RELIEF FRAUD CHARGES**

BATON ROUGE, LA – Two more Louisiana residents pled guilty yesterday in federal court on fraud charges related to a hurricane disaster relief program, United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced.

JIMMY RAY WHITFIELD, age 22, of Zachary, Louisiana, pled guilty yesterday before U.S. District Court Judge James J. Brady to Count Two of an indictment charging him with access device fraud in connection with the filing of fraudulent applications for disaster assistance benefits. The factual basis alleges that WHITFIELD was involved with his sister, Latasha Whitfield, in carrying out a scheme to defraud the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and LDOL by filing false claims for disaster unemployment benefits for losses incurred due to Hurricane Katrina. Latasha Whitfield was sentenced on April 29, 2008, to a 54-month prison term for her leadership in a wide-reaching scheme involving the creation and use of over eighty fraudulently obtained disaster unemployment debit cards. The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Postal Service's Office of Inspector General. As a result of his guilty plea to Count Two, WHITFIELD faces a maximum sentence of ten (10) years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. As part of the plea agreement, the U.S. Attorney's Office will dismiss the remaining counts of the indictment when WHITFIELD is sentenced on Count Two.

MARY A. ROBERTSON, age 35, of Plaquemine, Louisiana, pled guilty yesterday before U.S. District Court Judge James J. Brady to Count Five of an indictment charging her with mail fraud. The factual basis alleges that ROBERTSON filed a fraudulent application for FEMA benefits and caused FEMA to disburse five disaster assistance benefit checks to ROBERTSON totaling more than \$25,000. The case was investigated by the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, with assistance from the Plaquemine Police Department. As a result of her guilty plea, ROBERTSON faces a maximum sentence of twenty (20) years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. As part of the plea agreement, the U.S. Attorney's Office will dismiss the remaining counts of the indictment when ROBERTSON is sentenced.

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

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](mailto: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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