



Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas

Tim Johnson • Acting United States Attorney

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NEW ORLEANS WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS TO OBTAIN FEMA FUNDS FOR HURRICANE KATRINA

(HOUSTON) - Linda L. Johnson, 27, of New Orleans, La., has pleaded guilty to making false statements to obtain FEMA disaster assistance benefits following Hurricane Katrina, acting United States Attorney Tim Johnson announced today.

Johnson pleaded guilty at a hearing on Feb. 10, 2009, before United States District Judge Nancy Atlas. Sentencing has been set for April 27, 2009.

Johnson altered an Entergy utility bill as proof she resided at a residence on Metropolitan Street in New Orleans, the address she listed as her primary residence in her claim for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance, when in fact she did not either own nor reside at the residence. The original bill was addressed to another person for service at a different address on Metropolitan Street. Johnson altered the original bill to insert her name and the numerical address of another residence on Metropolitan street. The false statement enabled Johnson to receive a total of \$30,435 in FEMA disaster assistance for approximately two years beginning in October 2005.

A total of 89 individuals have been charged in the Southern District of Texas with fraud relating to Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita. Of the 77 defendants sentenced thus far for Hurricane Katrina fraud, 43 have received terms of imprisonment.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas is a member of the Department of Justice's Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, created to deter, detect and

prosecute unscrupulous individuals who try to take advantage of the Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita disasters. Headed by Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division, the Task Force is comprised of federal, state and local law enforcement investigating agencies and the United States Attorney's Offices in the Gulf Coast region and nationwide.

This case was investigated by the FBI and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jennifer Lowery.

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 or contacting the Disaster Fraud Fax at 1-225-334-4707 or the Disaster Fraud e-mail at disaster@leo.gov, 24 hours a day, seven days a week until further notice. Information can also be e-mailed to the inspector general at dhsoighotline@dhs.gov or sent by surface mail, with as many details as possible, to:

National Center for Disaster Fraud

Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4909

or

Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC, 20528

Attn: Office of Inspector General, Hotline.

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