



Department of Justice

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HARRISON COUNTY RESIDENT ARRESTED FOR HURRICANE KATRINA FRAUD

Jackson, Mississippi - United States Attorney Dunn Lampton announced today that **Paul Ladner**, of Pass Christian, Mississippi, waived arraignment today on charges of making false statements to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, as well as wire fraud. Ladner was indicted on December 5, 2006 for receiving over \$14,000 from FEMA by providing a false address in Pass Christian, Mississippi, and claiming hurricane damage at that address.

The case has been set for trial on March 5, 2007 before United States District Judge Louis Guirola, Jr. If convicted, Ladner faces up to sixty years in prison and up to \$1,250,000 in fines.

In September, 2005, 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, Alice S. Fisher, includes members from the FBI, 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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