



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Mississippi

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MISSISSIPPI WOMAN SENTENCED FOR KATRINA FRAUD

GULFPORT, Miss - Patti D. Richards of Vicksburg, Mississippi, was sentenced to 24 months probation and ordered to pay restitution to FEMA in the amount of \$2,000.00, U.S. Attorney Dunn Lampton announced today.

Richards pled guilty in January to causing \$2,000.00 to be mailed from FEMA by providing a false address in Gulfport, Mississippi, and claiming hurricane damage at that address.

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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