



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2006
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**MONTGOMERY MAN SENTENCED TO ONE AND ONE-HALF YEARS IN PRISON
FOR DEFRAUDING FEMA OF HURRICANE RITA DISASTER FUNDS AND FOR
OTHER SUPERVISED RELEASE VIOLATIONS**

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA—United States Attorney Leura G. Canary announced today that Willie Fred Goldsmith, age 58, of Montgomery, Alabama, was sentenced to eighteen months in federal prison for defrauding the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of Hurricane Rita disaster assistance and other non-FEMA violations.

Goldsmith is one of thirteen individuals charged thus far in the Middle District of Alabama with fraud relating to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita relief programs. He is the third such defendant to be sentenced. On March 31, 2006, Goldsmith pled guilty to a one-count information for filing a false claim with FEMA and to another non-FEMA related violation.

At Goldsmith's sentencing hearing yesterday, United States District Judge Myron Thompson sentenced Goldsmith to a term of six months imprisonment for defrauding FEMA. Goldsmith, who was on supervised release for other prior convictions, was also sentenced to 12 months imprisonment on a supervised release violation, to run consecutive with his FEMA charge. In total, Judge Thompson sentenced Goldsmith to serve eighteen months in federal prison. In addition to the prison term, Judge Thompson ordered Goldsmith to pay \$2,000 in restitution to FEMA and to serve a period of supervised release following his discharge from prison.

The investigation into Goldsmith's fraud began when the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, received information that someone with Goldsmith's name had a false claim with FEMA for Hurricane Rita disaster assistance. Investigation confirmed that a telephonic application in Goldsmith's name was made for FEMA disaster assistance on September 29, 2005. The application falsely represented that Goldsmith had suffered losses to a property that was rented as his primary residence in Harvey, Louisiana. Based on his claim, the Department of Treasury mailed a \$2,000 expedited disaster assistance check to a residence in Montgomery, Alabama. Goldsmith, who later admitted that he did not live in Harvey, received the check and cashed it.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Alabama is a member of the Department of Justice's Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, created by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales 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 Alice S. Fisher, 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 matter was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Christopher A. Snyder.

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