



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Dunn Lampton  
Southern District of Mississippi

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CONTACT: SHEILA WILBANKS  
PHONE: (601) 965-4480  
FAX: (601) 965-4409

## **MISSISSIPPI WOMAN SENTENCED FOR KATRINA FRAUD**

GULFPORT, Miss. – Ricci Lynn Hembree of Knoxville, TN was sentenced in U.S. District Court to a five year term of probation and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$13,498.00 after pleading guilty to submitting a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, U.S. Attorney Dunn Lampton announced today. Hembree caused \$12,578.00 to be mailed from FEMA and \$920.00 to be mailed from HUD by providing a false address in Pass Christian, Miss., 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 Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, Matthew Friedrich, 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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