



Department of Justice

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ANOTHER PLEADS GUILTY IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON FEDERAL FEMA FRAUD CHARGES

BATON ROUGE, LA – Another Louisiana resident pled guilty yesterday in federal court on fraud charges related to hurricane disaster relief programs, United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced.

KEOSHA N. MARTIN, age 24, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, pled guilty yesterday before U.S. District Court Judge James J. Brady to Counts One and Three of an indictment, each count charging her with making a false and fraudulent claim for Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita disaster assistance benefits. The indictment alleged that from in or about October 2005 to in or about November 2005, MARTIN was employed by FEMA as an Applicant Assistant whose duties included assisting disaster victims to apply for FEMA benefits. The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General; and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. As a result of her guilty plea to Counts One and Three of the indictment, MARTIN faces a maximum sentence of ten (10) years imprisonment, a \$500,000 fine, or both, per count. As part of the plea agreement, the U.S. Attorney's Office will dismiss Count Two of the indictment when MARTIN is sentenced on Counts One and Three.

The number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds stands at seventy-four.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the 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 Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division – includes the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys and others.

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443. 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, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until further notice. Information can also be emailed to the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force at HKFTF@leo.gov or sent by surface mail, with as many details as possible, to Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4909.

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