



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Dunn Lampton Southern District of Mississippi

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TWO YEAR PRISON TERM FOR FEMA FRAUD IN MISSISSIPPI

Jackson, Mississippi - United States Attorney Dunn Lampton announced today that Bryan Michael Beets of Vicksburg was sentenced to serve twenty-four months in prison followed by three years of supervised release. Beets was also ordered to pay \$3,854 in restitution, which is payable to FEMA and the American Red Cross. The sentence was imposed by U.S. District Judge David C. Bramlette.

Beets was the first FEMA fraud trial in Mississippi. A jury found him guilty of making false claims to the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") for hurricane relief funds. The evidence showed that Beets filed a false claim with FEMA using an address in Long Beach, Mississippi which belonged to his ex-wife. At the time of Katrina, Beets was living and working in Vicksburg. Additionally, the evidence showed that Beets received \$360.00 and 12 nights of hotel accommodations in Texas from the American Red Cross utilizing his ex-wife's address in Long Beach.

Beets was indicted on October 25, 2005 as a result of a joint investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service with assistance provided by the U.S. Marshal.

U.S. Attorney Lampton said, "The prosecution and sentence today show the continuing commitment of the Katrina Fraud Task Force to uphold the U.S. Attorney General's mandate of zero tolerance of Katrina Fraud."

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 members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, 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 file false and fraudulent claims.

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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