



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David R. Dugas
Middle District of Louisiana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2006
WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/LAM

CONTACT: DAVID R. DUGAS
(225) 389-0443
FAX: (225) 389-0561

**ANOTHER SENTENCED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA,
ON FEDERAL FEMA FRAUD CHARGE**

BATON ROUGE, LA – Another Louisiana resident was sentenced in federal court by U.S. District Court Judge Frank J. Polozola on a fraud charge related to a hurricane disaster relief program, United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced today.

TARSHA JOHNSON, age 27, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, pled guilty on May 8, 2006, to Count One of an indictment charging her with making a false claim for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance benefits. JOHNSON was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment followed by three years of supervised release with fifty hours of community service, and \$2,000 in restitution. The U.S. Secret Service; the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General; and the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, conducted the investigation of this matter. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard L. Bourgeois, Jr.

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.

###