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MAYOR AND POLICE CHIEF OF BALL, LOUISIANA INDICTED FOR HURRICANE DISASTER FRAUD

Three Additional Municipal Employees Cited For Theft of Federal Funds

Shreveport, La.: The Mayor and the Chief of Police of Ball, Louisiana, along with three additional municipal employees, were indicted by a federal grand jury today for falsifying employee timesheets in connection with the town's disaster aid request for payroll reimbursement from FEMA in the aftermath of Hurricane Gustav, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced today.

ROY HEBRON, age 55, the Mayor of Ball since 1987; JAY BARBER, age 54, Chief of Police; JUDY CROWE, age 57, a police department employee; BRENDA KIMBALL, age 53, Town Clerk; and CURTIS ATKINS, age 33, a police officer, were named in a three-count indictment which charges all five defendants with disaster fraud and conspiracy to commit disaster fraud. HEBRON and KIMBALL were charged with an additional count of theft of government money.

Hurricane Gustav made landfall in Louisiana on September 1, 2008. Rapides Parish received significant wind damage, flooding and power outages. The next day President George W. Bush declared a federal disaster emergency which in turn authorized the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide supplemental federal disaster grant assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair of damaged publicly owned facilities.

The indictment alleges that the defendants defrauded the government by overstating both the hours worked and the mileage on town vehicles and equipment used in response

to Hurricane Gustav, and later submitting the falsified time sheets to FEMA for reimbursement. The indictment also alleges that Mayor HEBRON and Town Clerk KIMBALL did the same thing in January 2006 in response to Hurricane Rita.

The crime of disaster fraud, enacted in January 2008, carries a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both. Conspiracy carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both. Theft of government money carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

All defendants have been ordered to appear for arraignment on October 15, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., before United States Magistrate Judge James D. Kirk.

An indictment is merely an accusation and all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Alexandria Resident Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Cytheria D. Jernigan.

If you have any information concerning this investigation, please contact Special Agent Randy Deaton at the FBI in Alexandria at 318-443-5097.

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