



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Louisiana

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ANOTHER CHARGED, ANOTHER SENTENCED ON DISASTER RELIEF FRAUD CHARGES IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced today that another Louisiana resident has been charged and another has been sentenced on fraud charges related to hurricane disaster relief programs.

JABAR M. TRIPLETT, age 31, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was charged in a bill of information on August 14, 2008, with mail fraud in connection with the filing of a fraudulent application with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Hurricane Rita disaster assistance benefits (Count One), and with illegal conversion of government property in connection with the unauthorized conversion of a check issued by FEMA to another person for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance benefits (Count Two). The charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Secret Service. If convicted, TRIPLETT faces a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both, on Count One, and ten years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both, on Count Two.

MARY A. ROBERTSON, age 35, of Plaquemine, Louisiana, pled guilty on May 8, 2008, to mail fraud. According to the factual basis, ROBERTSON filed a fraudulent application for FEMA benefits and caused FEMA to disburse five disaster assistance benefit checks to her totaling more than \$25,000. ROBERTSON was sentenced today by U.S. District Court Judge James J. Brady to four months home confinement, five years probation, and \$25,709.34 in restitution. The case was investigated by the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, with assistance from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General and the City of Plaquemine Police Department.

Last week's charge brings the total number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds to one hundred fifty-one.

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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