



Department of Justice

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ORLANDO MAN SENTENCED TO 5 MONTHS FOR FEMA FRAUD

Orlando, Florida - U.S. District Judge Anne C. Conway yesterday sentenced RAYMOND CUTTS III, 53, of Orlando, Florida to five months' imprisonment and ordered him to pay \$3,552 in restitution to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for his involvement in FEMA fraud for Hurricane Rita. The sentence also calls for CUTTS to serve three years on supervised release and stay 150 days in a halfway house.

CUTTS was arrested on October 24, 2007. On November 19, 2007, CUTTS pled guilty to one count of theft of government property. This case arises from fraudulent claims that were submitted for disaster assistance for Hurricane Rita, which made landfall in the Gulf Coast Region of the United States on August 29, 2005. According to the facts set forth in his Plea Agreement, CUTTS cashed two checks for disaster assistance for Hurricane Rita. One check was in the amount of \$2,000. The other was in the amount of \$1,352. CUTTS was not entitled to either check, because he lived in Florida at the time that Hurricane Rita made landfall. Despite that fact, CUTTS cashed both checks and kept the proceeds.

This case was the result of a joint investigation by the United States Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General (OIG), the FEMA Florida Long-Term

Recovery Office Fraud Prevention and Investigation Unit, the United States Postal Inspection Service, the United States Secret Service, with assistance from the Orlando Police Department. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Roger Handberg and Daniel Irick.

This case is part of the effort by the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force to prosecute disaster-related crimes from the 2005 hurricanes. The Task Force was created in September 2005 by then Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales to deter, investigate, and prosecute federal crimes arising from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

This case is just one of the thousands that have been investigated by FEMA's Florida Long-Term Recovery Fraud Prevention and Investigation Unit and the OIG. Through their joint efforts, the Unit and the OIG have targeted millions of dollars for recovery as part of a proactive effort to root out fraud. To date, the Unit and the OIG estimate that nearly \$4 million in unsubstantiated or unqualified FEMA claims have been rejected as a result of their work.

The Unit has an established toll-free fraud hotline, (866) 223-0814, along with an email address, StopFEMAFraud@dhs.gov, where suspected FEMA fraud may be reported.