



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: January 12, 2006

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DENTON COUPLE INDICTED FOR HURRICANE RELIEF FRAUD

(Sherman, TX) A Denton couple has been indicted for posing as Hurricane Katrina victims and attempting to defraud the federal government.

Indictments were returned today charging 38-year-old **CHRIS JANICE NEWTON** and 30-year-old **SCOTT ALLEN NEWTON** with making false claims and false statements in an application with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for disaster assistance related to Hurricane Katrina.

According to information presented in court, the couple received over \$6,000 in individual disaster assistance and disaster housing assistance by fraudulently claiming to be victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The case is part of an initiative by the Department of Justice Hurricane Fraud Task Force, established by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales this past Fall to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft and insurance and benefits fraud.

It is important to note that an indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of either guilt or innocence.

If convicted, the defendants each face up to 5 years in prison and a

fine of up to \$250,000.

The case was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney Randall Blake is prosecuting the case.

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