



**U. S. Department of Justice
U. S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas**
Chuck Rosenberg • United States Attorney

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**TEXAS CITY MAN CHARGED WITH DEFRAUDING FEMA OF
HURRICANE RITA DISASTER RELIEF FUNDS**

(GALVESTON, TX) United States Attorney Chuck Rosenberg announced today the arrest of John Wesley Holiday, 26, of Texas City, Texas, for filing a false claim with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and for mail fraud. Holiday, indicted by a federal grand jury on January 18, 2006, was arrested in Houston on Tuesday, January 24, 2006. He is expected to appear before United States Magistrate Judge John Froeschner in Galveston today. This case has been filed in the Galveston Division of the Southern District of Texas and will be prosecuted in Galveston.

According to the indictment, on October 8, 2005, Holiday filed a claim with FEMA for Hurricane Rita disaster assistance. Holiday is accused of falsely claiming an Avenue L address in Galveston, Texas, as his primary residence. Further, he is accused of falsely claiming that Hurricane Rita forced him to relocate to the home of friends or family in Texas City; and caused him to lose work. Based on Holiday's claim, the Department of Treasury mailed a disaster assistance check to the Texas City, Texas, address - the 3000 block of 9th Avenue N, - provided by Holiday.

The false claim count carries a maximum punishment of 5 years in prison, without parole, and a \$250,000 fine, upon conviction. The mail fraud count carries a maximum punishment of 20 years in prison, without parole, and a \$250,000 fine upon conviction.

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The return of this indictment today brings to seven the number of persons charged in the Southern District of Texas with filing false claims against FEMA for Hurricane Katrina and Rita disaster assistance.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas is a member of the Department of Justice's Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, created by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales to deter, detect and prosecute unscrupulous individuals who try to take advantage of the Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita disasters. Headed by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher, the Task Force is comprised of federal, state, and local law enforcement investigating agencies and the United States Attorney's Offices in the Gulf Coast region and nationwide. This matter was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Gregg Costa.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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