



# Department of Justice

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Middle District of Louisiana

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## **ONE PLEADS GUILTY, THREE MORE SENTENCED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON FEDERAL FEMA FRAUD CHARGES**

BATON ROUGE, LA – One Louisiana resident pled guilty and three Louisiana residents were sentenced in federal court on fraud charges related to hurricane disaster relief programs, United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced today.

KIM M. CUMMINGS, age 38, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, pled guilty today before U.S. District Court Judge John V. Parker to Count One of an indictment charging her with making a false and fraudulent claim for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance benefits. The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General. As a result of her guilty plea to Count One of the indictment, CUMMINGS faces a maximum sentence of five (5) years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. As part of the plea agreement, the U.S. Attorney's Office will dismiss Count Two of the indictment when CUMMINGS is sentenced on Count One.

VINITA S. LANE, age 28, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, pled guilty on June 14, 2006, to Count One of an indictment charging her with making a false and fraudulent claim for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance benefits. She was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Frank J. Polozola today to three years probation and \$2,000 in restitution. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service conducted the investigation of this matter.

JENNY L. LOWERY, age 22, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, pled guilty on May 23, 2006, to Count One of an indictment charging her with making a false and fraudulent claim for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance benefits. She was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Frank J. Polozola today to three years probation and \$1,916.38 in restitution. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted the investigation of this matter.

WHITNEY R. PAUL, age 19, of Donaldsonville, Louisiana, pled guilty on May 25, 2006, to Count One of an indictment charging her with making a false and fraudulent claim for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance benefits. She was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Frank J. Polozola today to five years probation and \$2,000 in restitution. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted the investigation of this matter.

The number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds stands at seventy-four.

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](mailto: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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