



# Department of Justice

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Middle District of Louisiana

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## **FOUR MORE INDICTED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON FRAUD CHARGES RELATED TO A HURRICANE DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM**

BATON ROUGE, LA – Four more Louisiana residents were indicted in federal court on charges of fraud related to hurricane disaster relief programs, United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced today.

SHAWANDA JOHNSON, age 34, and RHONDA L. ST. CYR, age 19, both of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, were each charged in a two-count indictment by a federal grand jury with mail fraud (Count One) and with making a false and fraudulent claim for disaster assistance benefits (Count Two). The charges against JOHNSON resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the charges against ST. CYR resulted from an investigation conducted by the Postal Inspection Service and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General. If convicted on Count One, JOHNSON and ST. CYR each faces a maximum sentence of thirty years imprisonment, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both. If convicted on Count Two, JOHNSON and ST. CYR each faces a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

KIMBERLY S. BOWMAN, age 21, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was charged in an indictment with two counts of mail fraud and one count of wire fraud in connection with disaster assistance benefits fraud. BOWMAN was charged with filing two false and fraudulent claims for FEMA disaster assistance benefits in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. BOWMAN was also charged with fraudulently claiming and receiving disaster unemployment assistance benefits that the U.S. Department of Labor and the Louisiana Department of Labor made available to individuals who became unemployed as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The case was investigated by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General. The maximum sentence for each of the three counts is thirty years imprisonment, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both.

Finally, CLARENA M. McGEE, age 55, of Fluker, Louisiana, was charged in a two-count indictment with wire fraud (Count One) and with aggravated identify theft (Count Two). The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General. If convicted on Count One, McGEE is faced with a maximum sentence of thirty years imprisonment, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both. If convicted on Count Two, McGEE faces a mandatory term of imprisonment of two years, in addition to the sentence imposed for Count One.

Today's indictments bring 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 fifteen.

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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