



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2007
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PLANO WOMAN SENTENCED FOR HURRICANE RELATED FRAUD

SHERMAN TX – United States Attorney John L. Ratcliffe announced that a 45-year-old Plano woman has been sentenced for hurricane related fraud in the Eastern District of Texas.

VERNETT T. WILLIAMS was sentenced today to three years probation and was ordered to pay \$5,909.80 in restitution by United States Magistrate Judge Don D. Bush. Williams pleaded guilty on April 11, 2007 to charges of theft of government money or property.

According to information presented in court, from December 2005 through April 2006, Williams willfully and knowingly provided false information to the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) in which she requested assistance for losses she reportedly suffered from Hurricane Katrina. Williams received \$5,909.80 in FEMA assistance to which she was not entitled as a result of her actions.

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 members of the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, among others.

The case is being investigated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Terri L. Hagan.

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