



Department of Justice

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**GALVESTON MAN SENTENCED TO ONE YEAR IN PRISON FOR DEFRAUDING
FEMA OF HURRICANE KATRINA DISASTER FUNDS**

GALVESTON, TX - United States Attorney Chuck Rosenberg announced today that Robert Foster, 39, of Galveston, Texas was sentenced to one year in federal prison for defrauding the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance. Foster, one of thirteen individuals charged in the Southern District of Texas with fraud relating to Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief programs, is the first defendant in such cases to be sentenced.

On December 2, 2005, Foster had pleaded guilty to one count of filing a false claim with FEMA and one count of mail fraud. At his sentencing hearing today, United States District Judge Samuel Kent sentenced Foster to a term of six months' imprisonment on each count to run consecutive, for a total prison term of one year. In addition to the prison term, Judge Kent ordered Foster to serve three years supervised release after his discharge from prison. Judge Kent also ordered that Foster pay \$2,000 in restitution to FEMA.

The investigation into Foster's fraud began when the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General received a tip that Foster had filed a false claim with FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance. Investigation confirmed that Foster applied for FEMA disaster assistance in a phone call on September 20, 2005. He designated Hurricane Katrina as the basis for his claim and stated that his damaged primary residence was 2700 Whitney Avenue, Harvey, Acadia Parish, Louisiana. Based on Foster's claim, the Department of Treasury mailed a \$2,000 expedited disaster assistance check to Foster at his residence in Galveston, Texas.

Investigation revealed that Foster was living in Galveston when Hurricane Katrina struck. He signed a rental agreement and moved into a Galveston residence effective on June 15, 2005 and prior to that had been living in Galveston at a hotel. Investigation confirmed that Foster was not living at the 2700 Whitney Address in Harvey, Louisiana when Hurricane Katrina struck, and after his arrest, Foster admitted that he had never resided at that address.

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 prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Gregg Costa.

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