

Westwego woman indicted in Hurricane Katrina fraud

FEMA, SBA benefits stolen, U.S. says

Saturday, August 30, 2008

West Bank bureau

A Westwego woman has been charged in a seven-count indictment with fraud in connection with Hurricane Katrina benefits. The U.S. attorney's office announced that Lisa N. Carey, 42, was indicted Thursday on five counts of giving false statements and two counts of theft of government funds. According to the indictment, Carey stated in her applications for FEMA and SBA benefits that she lived in Springfield. However, the indictment alleges that Carey lived in Harvey at the time of the storm. Carey also submitted a false building permit, two false residential leases and two false furniture repair bills to the Small Business Administration to induce the agency to release money to her from business and home loans, U.S. Attorney Jim Letten said in a news release. The total loss to the Federal Emergency Management Agency is \$2,000, and to the Small Business Administration, \$60,000, he said. The case was a joint investigation by Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and the Small Business Administration Office of Inspector General.

Each of the false statement charges carries a maximum prison term of five years, a \$250,000 fine and three years of supervised release after any imprisonment. Each theft count carries a maximum prison term of 10 years, a \$250,000 fine and three years of supervised release after any imprisonment.