COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS RESULT IN ARRESTS OF LOUISIANA FUGITIVES

by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott

TEXANS RIGHTLY OPENED our arms and hearts to our Louisiana neighbors as they fled the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Unfortunately, some parolees and unregistered sex offenders from the Bayou State exploited the situation and tried to hide from law enforcement while in Texas.

I was alarmed by this situation and my office worked with federal officials to get a list of these Louisiana fugitives so we could track them down.

Our Fugitive Unit identified Louisiana fugitives on the list provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Among the fugitives were people wanted for or convicted of homicide, assault, rape and other violent offenses.

Our Fugitive Unit conducted a statewide roundup that netted 13 of these men and women. Nine were arrested in Houston, two in Fort Worth, one in Austin and one in Conroe.

One of those arrested was a 19-year-old man who escaped custody after being arrested by the New Orleans Sheriff's Department for aggravated assault with a gun.

Investigators with our Fugitive Unit found out the man was living at an apartment complex in Houston and when they arrived at his apartment, they found him hiding in a closet. He was arrested and transported to the Houston City Jail.

Several of the arrests showcased our effective partnership with local law enforcement authorities.

In Fort Worth, for example, Fugitive Unit investigators received information that a Louisiana man, wanted for violating his parole in connection with a first-degree robbery conviction, was living in the city. The investigators notified Fort Worth police officers of his location and they promptly arrested him at his residence.

They also arrested a woman who had violated her parole in connection with a sex offense.

One Conroe officer went above and beyond in helping protect his community. Our Fugitive Unit discovered that a man who was wanted for a parole violation in connection with a robbery conviction was living at a Conroe apartment complex. Investigators contacted the security manager of the complex – who also happened to be an off-duty police officer – and confirmed the fugitive was residing there.

The officer then arrested him and transported him to the Montgomery County Jail.

I firmly believe that cracking down on parole violators will make Texas safer for children and families. Sex offenders, in particular, pose a real threat to children, which is why my Fugitive Unit has arrested more than 300 of these parole violators since I took office in December 2002. The Fugitive Unit has also arrested almost 40 unregistered sex offenders as part of a statewide initiative launched in April 2005.

Our Cyber Crimes Unit, meanwhile, works to arrest child predators who try to use the Internet to solicit meetings with children for sex. Since December 2002, we have made more than 70 of these arrests.

If you would like more information about our efforts to crack down on sex predators, see our website at www.oag.state.tx.us.