



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Louisiana

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GUILTY VERDICT IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON FRAUD CHARGES RELATED TO A HURRICANE DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced that a federal jury convicted ROY JOHNSON, age 51, of Baton Rouge, yesterday on fraud charges related to a hurricane disaster relief program.

The indictment, filed July 11, 2007, charged JOHNSON with three counts of mail fraud in connection with a fraudulent application for expedited disaster assistance benefits. JOHNSON applied for disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on September 17, 2005, falsely claiming that he had been living in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina and that he had evacuated to Denham Springs, Louisiana. In fact, at the time of the storm, and for all of 2005, JOHNSON was in state custody in the Baton Rouge, Louisiana, area. Prior to being incarcerated, JOHNSON lived in Baton Rouge. Through his false and fraudulent representations to FEMA, JOHNSON caused FEMA to mail him three checks for disaster assistance, totaling over \$14,000. JOHNSON was found guilty yesterday on all three counts.

U.S. District Court Judge James J. Brady presided over the two-day jury trial. Assistant United States Attorneys Alan A. Stevens and René I. Salomon prosecuted the case on behalf of the United States. JOHNSON faces a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both, on each of the three counts. Judge Brady will sentence the defendant following the completion of a pre-sentence investigation. The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General.

The number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds stands at one hundred thirty-six.

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 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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