



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2008
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TWO MORE SENTENCED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON DISASTER RELIEF FRAUD CHARGES

BATON ROUGE, LA – Two more Louisiana residents were sentenced this week in federal court on fraud charges related to a hurricane disaster relief program, United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced.

TERRI L. LEWIS, age 41, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, pled guilty on August 15, 2007, to Count One of an indictment charging her with making a false and fraudulent claim for disaster assistance benefits. LEWIS was sentenced on January 23, 2008, by U.S. District Court Judge Frank J. Polozola to three years of probation and \$2,000 in restitution to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted the investigation of this matter.

PAMELA D. WHITAKER, age 44, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, pled guilty on August 2, 2007, to an indictment charging her with two counts of mail fraud in connection with checks received from FEMA. WHITAKER was sentenced on January 24, 2008, by U.S. District Court Judge James J. Brady to three years of probation, including one month of home confinement, and \$4,358 in restitution to FEMA. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service conducted the investigation of this matter.

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-four.

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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