



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2008
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HOUSTON MAN SENTENCED FOR HURRICANE FRAUD IN PORT ARTHUR

BEAUMONT TX – United States Attorney John L. Ratcliffe announced that a 32-year-old Houston man has been sentenced to 6 months in federal prison for hurricane related fraud in the Eastern District of Texas.

BOB ALLEN HAYES, Jr., pleaded guilty on January 14, 2008 to making a materially false statement to FEMA in connection with applications he filed for federal disaster relief. He was sentenced today by United States District Judge Ron Clark. Hayes was also ordered to pay \$19,784.27 in restitution.

According to information presented in court, Hayes claimed his primary residence in Port Arthur, Texas sustained damage during Hurricane Rita in September 2005. Hayes also claimed his personal property sustained damage during the hurricane. In fact, Hayes did not live at the residence in Port Arthur during the storm and did not suffer losses which entitled him to receive FEMA assistance. An investigation revealed that the residence in question was owned by the Port Arthur Housing Authority and was vacant at the time of the storm. Hayes fraudulently received approximately \$20,000.00 in disaster related assistance for his claims. He was indicted by a federal grand jury in September 2007.

In September 2005, the Attorney General's Office 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 members of the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, among others.

This case was investigated by the United States Postal Service and the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert Hobbs.

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