Department of Justice

Southern District of Mississippi

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THREE MISSISSIPPIANS INDICTED FOR KATRINA FRAUD

JACKSON, MS—United States Attorney Dunn Lampton announced today the Indictment of Annie Travis, Roberta Mayes and Paula Mayes of Jackson, Mississippi, for making false claims to FEMA for hurricane relief funds. Annie Travis is charged with a single count of making a false claim to FEMA while the Mayes' are charged with conspiracy to make a false claim, along with making the false claim. The maximum penalty for Making a False Claim to FEMA is up to 5 years in prison and a $250,000 fine. The maximum penalty for Conspiracy to Make a False Claim is also up to 5 years in prison and a $250,000 fine.

These matters were investigated by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and the Postal Inspection Service.

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 members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Postal Inspector's Office and the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, among others.

Pursuant to the Justice Department initiative, a local Katrina Fraud Task Force was formed. Recognizing the significance of this event, nineteen federal and state law enforcement agencies have come together to jointly pursue and prosecute individuals who file false and fraudulent claims. The joint task force has also been working with county and local law enforcement in this effort.

If anyone has information concerning possible fraud being committed during the post-Katrina recovery effort, please call either the DHS-OIG Fraud Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or the FBI Fraud Hotline at 1-800-225-5324.

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