



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David R. Dugas
Middle District of Louisiana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2009
WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/LAM

CONTACT: DAVID R. DUGAS
(225) 389-0443
FAX: (225) 389-0561

ANOTHER INDICTED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON DISASTER RELIEF FRAUD CHARGES

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced that another Louisiana resident was indicted in federal court today on fraud charges related to hurricane disaster relief programs.

LYNN R. FLETCHER, age 44, of Denham Springs, Louisiana, was charged in a two-count indictment by a federal grand jury today with making false claims for disaster food stamp benefits. The indictment alleges that on or about September 9, 2005, FLETCHER submitted a fraudulent application for Hurricane Katrina disaster food stamp assistance. In her application, FLETCHER falsely claimed that Hurricane Katrina caused her to incur more than \$1,000 in disaster-related expenses. FLETCHER also falsely claimed that her household included six members, all of whom were affected by Hurricane Katrina when, in fact, two of the individuals that FLETCHER identified in her application, and for which she provided dates of birth, gender, and race, were actually pets. As a result of FLETCHER's fraudulent claim, FLETCHER received benefits to which she was not entitled.

The indictment also alleges that on or about September 17, 2008, FLETCHER submitted a fraudulent application for Hurricane Gustav disaster food stamp assistance. In this application, FLETCHER falsely claimed that her household included five members, all of whom were affected by Hurricane Gustav when, in fact, three of the individuals that FLETCHER identified in her application were household pets. As a result of FLETCHER's fraudulent claim, she again received benefits to which she was not entitled.

The charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the United States Secret Service with assistance from the Louisiana Department of Social Service, Office of Family Support, Fraud & Recovery Section. If convicted, FLETCHER faces a maximum sentence of five (5) years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both, per count.

Today's indictment brings the total number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds to one hundred seventy-five.

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 the Assistant Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice's 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.

###