



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Donald R. Burkhalter
Southern District of Mississippi**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 27, 2010

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mss

CONTACT: SHEILA WILBANKS

PHONE: (601) 965-4480

FAX: (601) 965-4409

TEXAS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO KATRINA FRAUD

Gulfport, Miss. – Joshua Allen, 25, formerly of Gulfport, Mississippi, now living in the San Antonio, Texas, area, pled guilty on April 26th before U.S. District Judge Sul Ozerden to submitting a false claim to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Hurricane Katrina benefits, U.S. Attorney Donald R. Burkhalter announced.

Allen admitted that he falsely claimed damage at an address at which he did not live for the purpose of misleading FEMA as to his residency at the time of Hurricane Katrina, and defrauding FEMA for the initial \$2,000.00 expedited assistance it provided him. He further admitted making a similar claim to receive \$965.00 from Red Cross. Amber Allison a/k/a Amber Allen, was charged as a co-conspirator but has not yet made her initial appearance before the court. She is currently incarcerated in Texas on unrelated charges. In a related case, Joshua Allen's father, Paul Allen, pled guilty on April 5, 2010 to defrauding FEMA of more than \$26,000.00 in funds and benefits. He is currently scheduled to be sentenced on July 13th.

Joshua Allen faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000.00. He is scheduled for sentencing before U.S. District Judge Ozerden on July 27, 2010.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In September, 2005, former Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the national 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 for the Criminal Division, Lanny A. Breuer, includes members from the FBI, Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, 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, consisting of over 20 Federal and State law enforcement agencies, was formed in the Southern District of Mississippi to pursue and prosecute individuals who engage in fraud associated with the hurricanes.

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.

###