



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Mississippi

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LUMBERTON POLICE CHIEF CONVICTED OF KATRINA FRAUD

Gulfport, Miss. – A jury found the Chief of Police of Lumberton, Mississippi, guilty on all eight counts of a Katrina fraud indictment in U.S. District Court today, Acting U.S. Attorney Stan Harris announced. Maurice Hammond, of Poplarville, MS, was convicted of false claims to FEMA, false statements to FEMA and the Small Business Administration, and wire fraud in applying for and receiving Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds.

Hammond was indicted in November 2008, by a federal grand jury for Hurricane Katrina related fraud. The proof presented to the jury by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Annette Williams and Kiana Foster, revealed Hammond received over \$19,000 plus a FEMA travel trailer by claiming he was living in a house he had purchased in Poplarville, but to which he had no water or electric service. The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and the Small Business Administration Office of Inspector General. Hammond faces a maximum of 5 years of imprisonment on each count of false claim and false statement and a maximum of 20 years of imprisonment on each count of wire fraud. He also faces a maximum fine of \$250,000 for each count, along with restitution to FEMA and a forfeiture judgment.

In September, 2005, the United States Department of Justice 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 Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, FBI, the Department of Housing and Urban Development 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.

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