

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Geneseo Man Charged with Fraudulently Receiving Hurricane Katrina Relief Funds**

Peoria, IL – Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that a Geneseo, Illinois man has been charged by criminal complaint with fraud related to his alleged receipt of Hurricane Katrina disaster relief funds. Timothy William Seefeldt, age 31, of Geneseo, made his initial appearance in federal court in Rock Island this afternoon and was ordered detained pending a detention hearing on December 15, 2005, at 3:00 p.m.

The affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint alleges that on September 19, 2005, Seefeldt completed an application for Hurricane Katrina disaster relief at the Moline, Illinois office of the American Red Cross. On the application, Seefeldt allegedly claimed that his primary residence was located in Biloxi, Mississippi, in an area declared a disaster by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. At that time, Seefeldt also requested housing assistance and was advised to call the Red Cross office the following day. On September 20, 2005, the affidavit alleges that, as a direct result of Seefeldt's request for housing assistance, the Red Cross made arrangements for lodging and approved Seefeldt to receive 14 nights of lodging at a Davenport, Iowa hotel.

On September 21, 2005, the affidavit alleges Seefeldt applied for FEMA disaster relief benefits, again allegedly claiming during the telephonic application process that his primary residence was in Biloxi, Mississippi. As a result, Seefeldt was issued two checks as FEMA benefits: a check for \$2,000 on September 22, 2005, for expedited housing assistance, and a second check on October 15, 2005, for \$2,358 for rental assistance. According to the affidavit, Seefeldt was unable to cash the second check because it was seized by the Rock Island County Sheriff's Department during the investigation.

The charge is the result of an investigation by the Rock Island County Sheriff's Department and the U.S. Secret Service. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sara L. Darrow.

Members of the public are reminded that a complaint is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

If convicted, the offense of wire fraud carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

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