



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JOPLIN WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DISASTER FRAUD RELATED TO TORNADO BENEFITS

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. - Tammy Dickinson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a former Joplin, Mo., woman pleaded guilty in federal court today to fraudulently receiving federal disaster benefits following the May 22, 2011 tornado.

Amy Cherie Feagan, 28, formerly of Joplin, pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge David P. Rush to the charge contained in a Dec. 13, 2012 federal indictment.

Feagan admitted that she applied for disaster assistance in June 2011. On June 3, 2011, Feagan met a FEMA inspector at a tornado-damaged apartment building in Joplin. Feagan completed an inspection, claiming to the inspector that the apartment building was her primary residence and answering his questions regarding her "residence." Based on those representations, FEMA authorized an \$11,764 payment to replace the contents of her claimed residence as well as numerous household items for herself and her children.

Feagan admitted today, however, that she did not reside in that apartment building at the time of the disaster. She had previously resided at that apartment, but moved some time earlier. At the time of the Joplin tornado, Feagan resided in transitional housing in Springfield following her release from incarceration.

By pleading guilty, Feagan admitted that she knowingly and fraudulently made materially false, fictitious, and fraudulent statements and representations to FEMA in connection with her application for disaster assistance.

Under federal statutes, Feagan is subject to a sentence of up to 30 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000 and an order of restitution. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven M. Mohlhenrich. It was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security-Office of Inspector General, the FBI and the Joplin, Mo., Police Department.

Disaster Fraud Hotline

Anyone with information about disaster fraud related to the Joplin tornado should call the National Center for Disaster Fraud hotline at 866-720-5721, the Joplin Police Department at 417-623-3131, or the FBI's Joplin office at 417-206-5700.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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