



The United States Department of Justice

United States Attorneys



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

TINIKA S. EALY, age 36, of Gonzales, Louisiana, pled guilty today before Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ralph E. Tyson to a bill of information charging her with wire fraud in connection with the filing of applications for loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBA provided assistance to the victims of disasters through low interest loans to fund the repair and restoration of storm damaged homes and businesses.

According to the factual basis in the plea agreement EALY caused an application for a home repair loan to be submitted to the SBA in October 2005, and in April 2008 she caused an application for a business loan to be submitted to the SBA. The bill of information alleges that EALY caused false and fraudulent receipts and invoices to be sent via facsimile to the SBA to allegedly support the claims of repairs being performed, when in fact no such work had been done. The submission of the fraudulent receipts and invoices caused the SBA to approve and issue a home repair loan totaling approximately \$94,000 and a business loan totaling approximately \$125,500.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General. As a result of her guilty plea, EALY faces a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. She may also receive a term of supervised release after imprisonment of not more than three years.

The number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds stands at one hundred seventy-one.

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.