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130

Five indicted in Starr County election fraud scheme

By SARA PERKINS, The Monitor

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At least four Starr and Hidalgo county political operatives have been indicted for voter fraud in what the Attorney General's office says was a large-scale effort to submit mail-in ballots for imaginary people in 2006's March Democratic primary election.

According to a press release from the AG's office, The four were indicted by a grand jury in Brooks County last week on charges related to the scheme, which allegedly involved registering fake voters to vacant lots in Starr County and having mail-in ballots sent to several Hidalgo County addresses.

The people indicted were Jose Rene Gomez, 33 — who is also charged with voting twice in the election — Oralia Frausto, 49, Oscar Rios, 37, Dolores Gutierrez, 58, and Maria Gonzalez.

Investigators suspect that Gutierrez and Gonzalez are the same woman, but nonetheless secured indictments against both names.

Only Rios, an Hidalgo County resident, has so far been arrested, according to AG's spokesman Tom Kelley.