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MADIGAN SUES SEVEN ILLINOIS HOME REPAIR CONTRACTORS

Attorney General Urges Consumers to Be Aware of Potential Fraud During Spring Home Repair Season

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today urged consumers to use caution when choosing home repair and remodeling contractors during the spring remodeling season as she announced seven lawsuits filed against home repair businesses, alleging they defrauded Illinois consumers of more than \$476,000 in down payments by performing substandard work or no work at all.

"Home repair, remodeling and construction complaints consistently rank among the top that my office's Consumer Fraud Bureau receives each year, especially during the warmer months," Madigan said. "Consumers need to make sure to ask questions before choosing a contractor so that they can avoid the types of companies we have sued today."

Madigan filed five lawsuits in Cook County against the following defendants:

- Boss Construction, Inc., a New Lenox, Ill., based company that sells and installs gutters, downspouts, roofing, siding, doors and windows, and its President Steven R. Smith,
- Alpine Glass & Window Co., a Wilmette, Ill.-based window and door installation company, and its President Carol L. Bernahl,
- John M. Burow, doing business as John's Home Repair, a Willow Springs, Ill.-based home repair service,
- Shane Rasmussen and Paul Haley of 123 General Construction, Inc., a Frankfort-based remodeling company,
- American Dream General Construction Company, based in Berwyn, Ill., and its President Carlos Villalvazo.

Madigan also filed a lawsuit in Bureau County against Charles Templeton of Templeton Construction, a Peru, Ill.-based home improvement firm, and in McHenry County, the Attorney General filed a lawsuit against Steven Tatgenhorst and his companies Precision Roofing & Restoration, Inc., based in Algonquin, Ill., and Xteriors, Incorporated of Crystal Lake, Ill.

The complaints allege that the defendants violated the Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act and the Home Repair and Remodeling Act by accepting thousands of dollars in down payments from consumers, but either performing substandard or incomplete work or, in some cases, failing to perform any work at all.

In each suit, the Attorney General is asking the court to permanently enjoin the defendants from engaging in the home repair trade in Illinois. Madigan is also seeking to have the defendants pay restitution to consumers, a civil penalty of \$50,000 per defendant, additional penalties of \$50,000 for each act committed with intent to defraud and an additional \$10,000 for each act committed against a senior citizen, and costs.

With the start of spring, many homeowners are considering necessary repair projects around their homes. Madigan reminded consumers that the best way to avoid home repair fraud is to request and then check references provided by contractors or deal only with companies and individuals who have done work for friends or neighbors.

Consumers can find home repair and remodeling tips and other information on Madigan's Web site by going to www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov and clicking on "Consumer." Consumers also can obtain more information on how to guard against home repair fraud by calling the Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotline at the following numbers:

Chicago 1-800-386-5438
Springfield 1-800-243-0618
Carbondale 1-800-243-0607

Assistant Attorneys General Kimberly Slider, Junko Minami, Janice Parker, Joshua Orenstein and Elizabeth Phalen are handling these cases for Attorney General Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau.

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