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August 2, 2011

MADIGAN SUES SPRINGFIELD AREA MAN FOR LAWN CARE SCHEME

Springfield — Attorney General Lisa Madigan sued a Springfield area man today for scamming consumers out of more than \$8,000 for landscaping services he failed to provide.

Madigan filed her suit in Sangamon County Circuit Court against John Wease, of Auburn, who went door-to-door in Sangamon County, defrauding consumers out of at least \$8,545 for contracted lawn care work.

"A contractor who goes door-to-door soliciting business should be an automatic warning sign for consumers," Attorney General Madigan said. "It's 'buyer beware' in these situations. Consumers need to be extra careful. Be sure to ask for references and insist on written estimates before deciding whether to hire a contractor."

Since at least January 2010, Wease offered consumers a free quote before requiring an upfront sum for the services. Madigan alleges Wease rarely completed any landscaping work – at times he never even started the work – and never issued refunds to affected homeowners.

The Attorney General is asking the court to prohibit Wease from working in the home repair business, void pending contracts and require the defendant to pay refunds to consumers. Madigan's lawsuit also seeks to impose on the defendant a civil penalty of \$50,000, additional penalties of \$50,000 if the defendant acted with the intent to defraud and a penalty of \$10,000 for violations against any person 65 years or older.

Madigan urged consumers who have been defrauded in this scheme to contact her Consumer Fraud Hotline immediately at (800) 243-0618.

Assistant Attorney General Philip Heimlich is handling this case for Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau.

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