



September 19, 2011

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN SUES THREE CHICAGO AREA HOME REPAIR CONTRACTORS***Consumers Bilked Out of Over \$600,000 for Work Never Completed***

Chicago —Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed three lawsuits against fraudulent home repair businesses that cheated Chicago area homeowners out of more than \$600,000 for repairs that were never completed.

Madigan filed the lawsuits in Cook County Circuit Court on behalf of consumers in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake and Will counties.

"The losses suffered by the dozens of consumers in these cases are staggering," Attorney General Madigan said. "We will be aggressive in our enforcement efforts, but I also urge homeowners to use great caution when hiring a contractor. Ask for references, and contact my office to check if complaints have been filed. Never feel pressured to sign agreements on the spot and always request estimates in writing."

Madigan's lawsuits were filed against alleged storm chaser Ricky Shattuck, of Mundelein, who solicited home repair service as RLCC, and James D. Johnsen, operating as Thermal Construction Windows.com, based in Des Plaines. The Attorney General also filed suit against Janeen Heilman, Erick Zerse and Chris Bidigare, operating as Fairway Construction and Maintenance Services LLC, based in Oak Park, and Rock Construction Management LLC, based in Westchester.

Madigan alleges Shattuck targeted homeowners for solicitation in the wake of severe weather, offering repair service to fix damage caused by storms that he never completed. Consumers living in Cook, Kane and Lake counties reported losses of more than \$8,900 to Madigan's office and the Better Business Bureau. Some consumers said Shattuck required them to sign over their storm-damage insurance checks as upfront payments for the work.

Madigan is alleging in her lawsuit against Johnsen that he cheated homeowners living in Cook, DuPage and Lake counties out of more than \$148,000 for repair work he never completed. Fifty-four consumers reported to Madigan's office, the BBB and Angie's List that Johnsen failed to complete repairs, despite requiring them to pay an upfront payment for half of the contracted work.

And in her lawsuit against Heilman, Zerse and Bidigare, the Attorney General said consumers living in Cook and Will counties reported losses of more than \$511,000 for work that was never completed. They reported to Madigan's office and the BBB that the defendants accepted upfront sums from \$1,050 to more than \$174,000.

Madigan's lawsuits are asking the court to permanently prohibit the defendants from working in the home repair trade in Illinois, cancel any pending contracts with homeowners and obtain restitution for affected consumers. The lawsuits also seek to impose on the defendants an array of civil penalties for the allegations laid out in each of the complaints.

Attorney General Madigan urged homeowners to contact her Consumer Fraud Hotline, 800-386-5438, to report being victimized by a home repair scheme or to learn tips for finding a reputable contractor.

Assistant Attorneys General Colleen Bisher, E. Paige Boggs and Andrew Dougherty are handling the cases for Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau.

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