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August 6, 2015

*****CONSUMER ALERT*******MADIGAN ALERTS CHAMPAIGN AREA TO HOME REPAIR SCAMS*****Attorney General Warns Champaign-Urbana Residents of Driveway Paving Scam***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today issued an alert after receiving reports of con artists traveling in the Champaign-Urbana area scamming homeowners out of thousands of dollars for shoddy asphalt-paving services.

Madigan's office has received reports of con artists traveling the area door-to-door soliciting work to pave driveways. The scammers intimidate homeowners, oftentimes seniors, and demand that they pay large sums of money up front without providing cost estimates. Such solicitors will often claim to have leftover materials from a nearby job, and offer a low or "discounted" price per square foot or yard, but will refuse to provide a total price estimate in advance. At the end of the job, these scammers claim to have used more material than anticipated and demand exorbitant amounts that far exceed the value of the work completed.

"Any time someone appears at your door and tries to pressure you into paying thousands of dollars for work without providing a written estimate in advance, you should be very skeptical and concerned," Madigan said. "If you have experienced this sort of solicitation, please contact my office immediately to file a complaint."

Most of these scam solicitors are driving vehicles with out-of-state license plates that do not have official signage to indicate the business they represent. When they come to the door, these scammers often use intimidating or high-pressure tactics. Residents who have concerns about a solicitation or feel threatened by a solicitor should turn them away and immediately contact the local police department.

Madigan urged homeowners to always ask questions before signing any agreements and to exercise caution when hiring contractors. To avoid being cheated, she suggests homeowners:

- Obtain written estimates from multiple contractors and get in writing the terms of the contract;
- Seek referrals from people they trust;
- Ask to see licenses and permits; and
- Never pay in full until the work is completed, and do not pay cash.

Madigan also reminded homeowners that Illinois law requires contractors to furnish clients with written contracts for work costing more than \$1,000. Additionally, contractors must carry insurance for property damage, injury and improper repairs.

To determine if a home repair company has been the subject of consumer complaints or to report a home repair scam, consumers should contact Madigan's Consumer Fraud Hotline at (800) 243-0618.

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