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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**LANDSCAPER ACCUSED OF DEFRAUDING TWO HOMEOWNERS  
SENTENCED TO ONE YEAR IN PRISON**

El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal today announced the sentencing of a Horizon City landscaper accused of Deceptive Business Practices.

This afternoon 46-year-old Jesús Chávez received the maximum sentence possible after pleading guilty to two counts of committing a Deceptive Business Practice, a crime of dishonesty punishable by up to one year in jail and/or a fine not to exceed \$4,000.

According to court records, between October 19 and October 24, 2007 Chávez received \$6,800 to landscape the front and back of an East El Paso home, but the work was never completed.

Between August and September of the same year, on another unrelated incident, an Upper Valley resident gave Chávez more than \$8,500 to landscape the front of his house, but just as in the previous case, the job was never completed.

After accepting the guilty plea, County Court at Law #2 Judge Julie González sentenced Chávez to 365 days in jail for each count, to run concurrently.

El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal said the harsh sentence should send a message to dishonest contractors who prey on unsuspecting consumers. These businesses often promise huge financial savings to the consumer who ultimately ends up with nothing.

“These cases should also warn consumers about the dangers of paying for work in advance, because if the work is never completed, it is very difficult to get their hard-earned money back,” Bernal concluded.

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