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CONTRACTOR SENTENCED FOR DECEPTIVE BUSINESS PRACTICES

El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal today announced the sentencing of a North-East contractor accused of Deceptive Business Practices.

34-year-old José Martínez pled guilty this week to 2 counts of committing a Deceptive Business Practice, a crime of dishonesty punishable by up to one year in jail and/or fine not to exceed \$4,000. According to the police complaint, on December 14, 2007 Martínez charged an east-side home owner \$9,550 to fix a roof and build a carport; however the job was never finished.

During the course of the investigation, it was revealed that in his advertisements Martínez falsely claimed he was licensed and bonded.

After accepting the guilty plea, County Court at Law #2 Judge Robert Anchondo sentenced Martinez to 90 days in jail.

El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal said consumers should not only make sure contractors are licensed and bonded, but need to make sure all the permits are filed with the City.

“Con artists will do anything to get their hands on your money, including being dishonest about licenses and bonds. Consumers need to be very careful to hire only reputable businesses and not pay for work upfront,” Bernal said.

“Once a homeowner parts with his money, all he has in return is the hope that the contractor will do what he said he would do. Civil suits against contractors are often a waste of time and money because even if the homeowner wins the suit he frequently cannot collect on the judgment,” Bernal finalized.

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