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**REMODELER SENTENCED TO JAIL FOR ENGAGING IN
DECEPTIVE BUSINESS PRACTICES**

El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal today announced the sentencing of a 48-year-old East El Paso resident accused of engaging in Deceptive Business Practices.

On March 13, 2013, Adrian Zamarripa, owner of “A to Z Remodeling”, pled guilty in three Deceptive Business Practice cases before County Court at Law #4 Judge Alex Gonzalez. Zamarripa was sentenced to 18 months in jail and a \$10,000 fine.

The first case involved a victim who paid the Defendant over \$100,000 in advance to remodel his home, but the work was never finished. Since some services were delivered, it was determined that the amount of restitution due was just over \$75,000. The Defendant repaid the victim \$20,500, but thereafter failed to make any additional payments. After pleading guilty in this case, Zamarripa was sentenced to 365 days in jail and a \$4,000 fine.

In the second case, the victim paid Zamarripa more than \$18,000 to remodel her home; however, the job was never completed. In this case Judge Gonzalez sentenced Zamarripa to 365 days in jail and a \$4,000 fine.

In the third case, the victim paid the Defendant \$5,000 to remodel her home and, again, failed to do so. In this case Zamarripa was sentenced to 180 days in jail and a \$2,000 fine. Zamarripa won't begin serving this sentence until he completes the first two sentences.

El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal expressed her satisfaction on the outcome of the case. “As a prosecutor, one of my priorities has always been to obtain as much restitution as possible for the victims of deceptive merchants. However, this is not always possible. The victims in these cases will never recover in full their hard-earned money, but at least they got some justice through the court system,” Bernal said.

Bernal explained that this case illustrates how difficult it is to recover money for victims of unscrupulous merchants.

“Consumers interested in remodeling their homes need to investigate the reputation of the contractors and be very cautious when paying money up front. We recommend the public not pay the complete amount of the contract until after the job is finished, and the homeowner is satisfied with the quality of the work,” Bernal concluded.

In addition to the Better Business Bureau, residents interested in investigating the background of a prospective contractor can look up their criminal and civil case histories by visiting the County’s website at www.epcounty.com/records.

Residents who might have fallen victims of fraud or deceptive business practices are asked to contact the Criminal Section of the County Attorney's Office at 546-2050.

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