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CON ARTIST SENTENCED TO 6 MONTHS IN JAIL AFTER PLEADING GUILTY OF SWINDLING EL PASO ENTREPRENEURS

El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal today announced that a northeast resident accused of taking thousands of dollars from local entrepreneurs was recently convicted and sentenced by a County Court judge.

On January 28, 2015, Johnny Ray Mills plead guilty to three counts of Deceptive Trade Practices stemming from two different cases.

In the first case, Mills plead guilty to one count of Deceptive Trade Practices for taking more than \$3,200 from the owners of the restaurant franchise “Wing It,” to secure the rental of non-existent commercial property inside Fort Bliss. The victims also paid more than \$300 to advertise their restaurants to soldiers and families at the military base, but the defendant never rendered the services. The offenses occurred between November and December 2013. For this case, County Court at Law #2 Judge Julie Gonzalez sentenced Mills to 180 days in jail.

In the second case, Mills plead guilty to two counts of Deceptive Trade Practices for taking almost \$600 from the owner of “Tidal Wave Spas and Pool Supplies” to advertise the business at the Freedom Crossing Shopping Center. The incident occurred in November 20, 2013. Mills was charged with one count for offering services he was not authorized to offer, and with a second count for failing to deliver the advertising services he was paid to provide. County Court at Law #2 Judge Julie Gonzalez also sentenced Mills to 180 days in jail for each of the two charges. All the sentences will run concurrently.

El Paso County Attorney Jo Bernal said that these sentences should send a strong warning to those thinking about defrauding consumers in El Paso.

“Committing fraud against businesses or individuals in Texas, regardless of the amount, is a serious crime. Defendants can be sent to prison for several years,” Bernal said.

“If someone feels that has been the victim of an unscrupulous merchant, we are asking them to file a report with the local law enforcement agency as soon as possible, or call our office at (915) 546-2050,” Bernal concluded.

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