

**NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Attorney General’s Office secures prison time, restitution, in Grand Junction roofing fraud case**

August 22, 2019 (GRAND JUNCTION, Colo.)—Today, Attorney General Phil Weiser announced that George Harris, a roofing contractor who deceived clients and used business funds for personal luxury, was sentenced to eight years in prison for felony theft to be followed by ten years on economic crimes probation.

Harris, using his front-business East West Roofing LLC, offered potential clients an initial estimate for roofing repairs and solicited down payments, then failed to complete the contracted roofing project. He kept and used the solicited funds for personal expenses, including multiple houses, frequent lavish meals, and anti-aging procedures. Between June 2014 and May 2015, he scammed 30 victims in Durango, Grand Junction, Montrose, and Summit County out of over $250,000.

Harris was indicted by a grand jury in 2017 and found guilty on all seven counts of theft in the Twenty-first Judicial District Court in Grand Junction. Today’s sentencing follows a four-week trial held in June of this year. He will serve eight years in prison. Additionally, he will pay restitution to the individuals he wronged and will be placed on economic crimes probation for ten years consecutive with his sentence. Harris’s business partner, who pled guilty to class 3 felony theft and was a cooperating witness at trial, will also pay restitution.

“When bad actors—especially ones providing essential services like roofing repair—victimize and deceive consumers, they hurt the entire community,” said Weiser. “Dishonest and deceptive businesses that violate the law and steal from Coloradans will not be tolerated. Those who engage in these illegal business practices must be held accountable.”

The Residential Roofing Bill of Rights, which became law in 2012, requires roofing contractors to keep client funds in a trust either until materials have been ordered or a large portion of the contracted roof has been completed. Harris broke this law, despite having full knowledge of its existence. Numerous community members and victims, many of whom were older adults, explained how Harris harmed the Western Slope community.

The Criminal Justice section at the Colorado Department of Law (DOL) received the case from the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB), a non-profit agency that monitors insurance-related crimes and refers them to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation and prosecution.

“This is a clear example of our continued partnership with our property and casualty member companies and law enforcement to combat roofing contractor fraud,” said NICB chief operating officer Jim Schweitzer.

“Unfortunately, we see this type of fraud happen especially after a major hail storm where unscrupulous contractors are looking for ways to make a quick buck off homeowners in a vulnerable situation. This is why we encourage homeowners to contact their insurance company or agent if they have damage to their property, and always be suspicious of a contractor that tries to rush you into signing a contract or start work without providing any references.”

The Criminal Justice section prosecuted the case. During the trial, DOL attorneys were sworn in as Special Deputy District Attorneys under 21st Judicial District Attorney Dan Rubenstein who provided local support during the month-long trial.

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