

# Schaumburg firm accused of consumer fraud in suit

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A Schaumburg-based home reconstruction company is among three such businesses being sued by the Illinois attorney general's office on allegations of deceptive practices and consumer fraud.

Fidelity Reconstruction LLC no longer has an active phone number at 1900 E. Golf Road, Suite 95, in Schaumburg, and its previously listed Web site is also defunct.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan Thursday announced the lawsuit against Fidelity Reconstruction and two other firms as a warning to "storm chasing" con artists who attempt to exploit natural disasters for personal gain. The lawsuits ask the court to permanently enjoin the defendants from home repair work in Illinois. Madigan is also seeking

full restitution to victims, a civil penalty of \$50,000 per defendant, additional penalties of \$50,000 for each act committed with an intent to defraud and another \$10,000 for each act committed against a senior.

In a prepared statement, Madigan urged homeowners to be on their guard against door-to-door solicitors offering home repair work after major storm damage.

"In the days and weeks after severe storms, these con artists flood into our local communities and take advantage of stressed consumers, often pressuring them to make snap decisions about repairing the damage."

Named as co-defendants in the suit against Fidelity Reconstruction are company managing member Shel St. Clare of Wilmette and agents Richard Rinaolo of Lake Forest and Robert Picchiotti of Chicago.

None of the co-defendants could be reached Thursday.

Lawsuits were also filed against WeatherStorm, a dissolved Indianapolis company that had offices in Illinois, and Bertram Leo Snyder, a Kentucky resident who operates Quality Roofing and Siding and A-1 Construction in Carterville, Ill.

The three lawsuits were filed on behalf of victims defrauded of more than \$243,000 in down payments for work that either never occurred or was done in a substandard fashion, the attorney general's office said.

Natalie Bauer, a spokeswoman for the office, said complaints about such businesses are received by the attorney general's consumer fraud bureau.

"Once they start to detect a pattern or potential pattern of fraud, that's what triggers an investigation," Bauer said.