



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY PROSECUTOR

**MERCER COUNTY
COURT HOUSE
P.O. BOX 8068**

JOSEPH L. BOCCHINI, JR.
Prosecutor

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08650-0068
PHONE: (609) 989-6350
(609) 989-6305
FAX #: (609) 989-0161

JANETTA D. MARBREY
First Assistant Prosecutor

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CONTACT: Casey A. DeBlasio
(609) 989-6379

Local Contractor Indicted on Theft, Failure to Register Charges

TRENTON -- A Mercer County grand jury returned indictments last week charging a Mercer County home improvement contractor in two separate crimes, Mercer County Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini Jr. announced today.

Mark Ice, 53, of South Broad Street, Hamilton, was charged with one count of failing to register as a home improvement contractor for selling heating and air conditioning work to a homeowner in Robbinsville Township in February 2011.

The second indictment charges Ice with one count of theft by deception and one count of failing to register as a home improvement contractor for accepting a \$5,000 deposit from a homeowner in Hopewell Borough in April 2011 and not performing any work or returning the money.

The indictments are the result of referrals to the prosecutor's office by the Mercer County Division of Consumer Affairs and investigation by the prosecutor's Economic Crime Unit.

The theft charge is a third-degree crime that carries a maximum penalty of five years in state prison and a \$15,000 fine. The failure to register charge is a fourth-degree crime that carries a maximum sentence of 18 months in state prison and a \$10,000 fine. Assistant Prosecutor James Scott presented the cases to the grand jury.

To confirm that a contractor is registered to do business in New Jersey, Bocchini said that residents should call the Mercer County Division of Consumer Affairs at (609) 989-6671.

The Mercer County Division of Consumer Affairs handles complaints from individual consumers against local businesses. The office protects Mercer County consumers from fraudulent and unconscionable business practices. It also provides consumer counseling and complaint resolution services to approximately 350,000 Mercer County residents. While its jurisdiction is most Mercer County businesses, the office provides a referral service to assist all county consumers.

Despite having been indicted, every defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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