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NEWS RELEASE

FROM:

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FORECLOSURE CONSULTANTS SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS & EIGHT MONTHS IN PRISON AND ORDERED TO PAY BACK \$312,450.00

On June 24, 2011, two foreclosure consultants, who ran a fraudulent loan modification business, were each sentenced to three years and eight months in prison and ordered to pay \$312,450.00 in restitution to 80 victims. Amir Rashidifar, 28, and Mary Margaret Delvecchio, 30, were each convicted of two felony counts of Foreclosure Consultant Fraud, in violation of Civil Code Section 2945.4(g).

The defendants operated a business called Legal Support Services that claimed to help financially-distressed homeowners modify their mortgages. From September 2008 to February 2009, the defendants had employees call homeowners on the "foreclosure list" and promise to negotiate with the banks to modify their mortgages. Victims generally paid \$3,100; no services were provided. Delvecchio also falsely claimed to be affiliated with a law firm and was also convicted of one misdemeanor count of Unauthorized Practice of Law, in violation of Business and Professions Code Section 6126(a).

When the business was shut down in February 2009, the defendants fled to Canada. In July 2009, U.S. Customs agents arrested them after tracing a delivery of items used to create false identities. They have remained in custody since their arrests.

The case was investigated by the San Jose Police Department when numerous victims and two former employees reported the fraud. The original complaint named 23 victims but the D.A.'s Office and the Victim Witness Assistance Center were able to track down a total of 80 victims after sending letters and making calls to over 100 persons. During the investigation the police seized approximately \$50,000 which will now be distributed to the victims as a part of the total restitution ordered.

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