

District Attorney Marc Bennett
18th Judicial District of Kansas



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WICHITA, KAN. – Two small business owners in Wichita have resolved their criminal cases with the Sedgwick County District Attorney's office.

In the first case, on January 20th, James Morales, 41 of Wichita, pled guilty to one count of deceptive commercial practice. Morales held himself out as a contractor.

The case resulted from a complaint from an 85-year-old Wichita woman who paid Morales to install flooring in her house. The victim reported that she paid Morales to start the project but he refused to finish the job or refund her money.

As part of the plea, Morales refunded the victim \$3,000. Two additional counts against Morales were dismissed.

In the second case, on January 28th, Teresa Molinaro, 44 of Wichita, entered a no contest plea to one count of deceptive commercial practice. Molinaro operated a used car lot in Wichita called 5 Star Motors that is now closed.

Investigators alleged that Molinaro had sold the same car to two different people on two different dates.

As part of her plea, Molinaro refunded the first buyer her \$2,100 down payment. The second buyer was allowed to keep the car.

Both cases were handled by the Investigations Division of the District Attorney's Office.

Deceptive commercial practice is the knowing act, use or employment by any person of any deception, fraud, false pretense, false promise, or misrepresentation of a material fact, with the intent that others shall rely thereon in connection with the sale of any merchandise.

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