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Roofer charged with failing to complete work

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The owner of a Windber roofing company is charged with not finishing two Somerset County projects.

Jason Lee Diirner, 34, West Main Street, Somerset, was charged with two counts each of theft by deception, theft by failure to make required disposition of funds and receiving stolen property and one count of conspiracy in two cases, one filed by state police and one filed by Summit Township police.

In the first case state police said the Meyersdale Grace Brethren Church received an estimate from Diirner's company, Specialty Roofing Co., based out of Windber, to replace the roof on the church and parsonage on April 25 for \$11,360. Diirner was paid \$5,680 as a down payment for work to be completed, police said. A second estimate was given on May 2 for \$19,550. Seven days later an additional \$9,775 was given to Diirner as a down payment, police said. Diirner received another \$9,495 as a final payment. The church received another estimate for new repair work for \$11,200 in June, police said.

Diirner contacted the church's secretary and said the check had been lost and asked for another \$11,200 check. According to court documents both checks were deposited into the business's account.

Police said the only work that has been completed was the \$19,550 parsonage roof.

Summit Township police also filed charges saying Diirner took \$5,000 for a project he didn't complete at a Pine Hill Road residence. Police said Diirner met with David Baker and gave an estimate of \$10,200 on June 29 to remove and dispose of shingles on the roof and install drip edge, roof vents, flashing, sheeting and shingles.

On July 1 the contract was modified to \$7,500 and Baker wrote a check for \$5,000 as a down payment, police said. The check was not made out to Specialty Roofing, but to Diirner's girlfriend,

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Melody Holbrook, police said. The work was scheduled to begin July 4, but Diirner did not show up. Baker called Diirner repeatedly. Baker heard about Diirner being arrested in Cambria County for similar incidents and contacted police, according to court documents.

Diirner has been held in the Cambria County Prison since August on a \$100,000 bond for similar charges. Police said in those cases Diirner took money for jobs he did not complete.

Diirner's attorney, Michael Kuhn of Somerset, said his client was behind on some work and the high bond amount is keeping him in jail and not allowing him to complete work.

"My client is trying to get out of jail so he can work to make amends and to finish all the contracts he has started," Kuhn said. "He's having a difficult time. Some of the district judges in Cambria County have the bond so high it might be impossible to get him out of jail."

Kuhn explained that Diirner had some employee issues and was backed up on projects.

"He intends on fulfilling every contract," he said. "It is a shame he has to sit in jail because a couple district judges have the bond so high."

Kuhn said bond is supposed to be a guarantee that a person will show up for court, not a punishment.

"It is certainly a punishment to keep him in jail," he said.

Typically a bail bondsman asks for around 7 percent of the bond to post for an individual. That money is not reimbursed at the end of the criminal case.

Diirner was arraigned Thursday morning for the additional two cases by District Judge Douglas McCall Bell, Meyersdale, who set the bond on the new cases for \$25,000, with an additional \$10,000 unsecured bond.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. Oct. 27 before Bell.

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