

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Central District of Illinois

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, February 7, 2019

## **Owner of Gire Roofing Sentenced to Three Years in Prison for Visa Fraud; Harboring, Employing Illegal Aliens**

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – U.S. District Judge Sue E. Myerscough today sentenced Edwin J. Gire, 47, owner of Gire Roofing, Inc., of Champaign, Ill., to three years in prison for visa fraud and for harboring and employing illegal aliens. In addition, Gire was ordered to pay a fine of \$30,000, and to remain on supervised release for two years following his release from prison. The Bureau of Prisons will determine the date and facility where Gire is to self-report to begin serving his sentence.

Grayson Enterprises, Inc., Gire Roofing's parent company, was sentenced to a three-year term of probation and ordered to pay a fine of \$250,000.

In January 2018, Gire and Grayson Enterprises were convicted of visa fraud (four counts) and harboring illegal aliens (three counts) following a bench trial before Judge Myerscough. Gire had previously entered pleas of guilty to three misdemeanor counts of unlawful employment of aliens.

At today's hearing, Judge Myerscough found that both Gire and Greyson Enterprises obstructed justice during the trial by committing perjury and providing false information to the court. The court found that as a result of the fraud, more than 100 fraudulent H-2B worker visas were issued to Gire Roofing from 2011 to 2014. To justify the number of H-2B worker visas requested, Gire provided multiple fraudulent roofing contracts, including contracts for work that customers never agreed to and contracts with forged signatures of the alleged customers or their representatives.

At trial, the court found that undisputed evidence proved that Gire knew or recklessly disregarded the fact that illegal aliens were allowed to live in a building owned by his company. Gire did this to make the aliens' employment as roofers for Grayson Enterprises attractive despite the fact that Grayson Enterprises was paying them less than the applicable prevailing wage. By giving the aliens a place to live, the court found that Gire safeguarded the aliens from the authorities by making it more difficult for authorities to locate them.

The charges were investigated by the U.S. Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service; the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Eugene L. Miller and Matthew Weir represented the government in the case prosecution.