

People Scammed Out of Millions

Two people have been charged with fraud relating to the sale of government owned and municipal land. The Department of Human Settlements and Public Works in KwaZulu-Natal, together with the SAPS, is investigating these bogus property developers. According to the Human Settlements spokesperson Kiru Naidoo, syndicates had been selling land for millions of rand and the department was bringing them to book.

The businessmen have allegedly swindled 16 people out of more than R2million by pretending they were selling homes and vacant land in

Phoenix.

One of the victims, who is a businessman, claimed that he was duped into parting with R1.5m for 14 vacant plots. He said he met the accused last February and was taken to the sites. The accused appeared to have legitimate document from the municipality, and this induced him to deposit money into his Cedarbiz Investment account over a period of nine months. After paying the money, he did not hear from the accused, and he preferred a charge of fraud.

Another victim said he and the accused attended the same church. He said he was interested in buying a home and was taken to a housing development in Fiddlewood Crescent, Woodview, north of

Durban, and was told a three-bedroom home was priced at R600000.

“He said they were selling the properties on behalf of six directors from a company called Cedarbiz Investments in uMhlanga.”

The man deposited R50000 into the account as requested and was told he would have to pay off the rest within seven years. He said everything appeared above board until the accused stopped taking his calls.

In November, he returned to the property and a building contractor said the developer was Madupha Construction and was owned by Beauty Ntoeela.

Ntoeela said she had not heard of the accused or his company and she subsequently opened a case of fraud as they had used her housing development to swindle people out of money.

An elderly couple claimed they parted with R30000 in November 2014. The accused allegedly told them the government intended building free-standing homes, each valued at around R580 000, in Grove End, near Woodview. But as they were pensioners, they only had to pay R280000.

The accused took the couple, aged 72 and 69, to view the plot and asked them to pay R30000 to secure the land. Their children gave

them the money and they never heard from the accused again.

A pastor, 42, of Whetstone, said he invested R111 000. He met the accused and his alleged partner in November 2016 and was shown land in Croftbury, in the same area. “On one site, I intended building a church and on the other two homes.” He deposited the funds, but nothing materialised.

Another pastor claimed he purchased land for R470000 in Grove End and Sunford - and again nothing materialised.

Police spokesperson Colonel Thembeke Mbele said a case of fraud was being investigated.