



# Senior Bulletin

November 2012

## Avoiding and resolving contractor complaints

Home renovations, additions and improvements don't always go exactly as planned. And when things go wrong, the situation easily can escalate, with homeowners and contractors blaming each others.

The Nevada State Contractors Board recommends several steps homeowners can take to fully understand their rights and responsibilities in hiring contractors. First, always hire licensed contractors.

They have passed the required trade and law exams to ensure knowledge of industry standards. They also carry workers' compensation insurance; they, not you, are responsible for any on-the-job injuries that may occur. And when you hire licensed contractors, you could be eligible for compensation from the Residential Recovery Fund if you incur dam-

ages as a result of construction.

Next, understand and sign a contract that spells out exactly (in detail) what work will be performed, what materials will be used and when and how much you'll pay for the project.

### Reasons to contact NSCB

- To check a contractor's license status or to determine the proper classification of a licensed contractor needed for your project;
- To learn about contract requirements and other best practices tips and information before signing a contract;
- If any communication issues arise between you and your contractor; or
- If you are unhappy with the work being performed or identify workmanship is-

sues.

### How NSCB can help

- Provide you information on licensed contractors over the phone and answer any questions you may have;
- Provide you information on community programs offering discounted or free home repairs;
- Investigate claims of workmanship by sending an investigator to your home to review and discuss your concerns;
- Order a licensed contractor to correct valid workmanship issues identified by an NSCB investigator; or
- Help resolve communication issues between a homeowner and contractor.

The Board has a number of resources available on its website to help guide you through the contracting process and make you aware of scams and high pressured tactics used by unscrupulous individuals. NSCB encourages seniors to be proactive and contact the Board as soon as concerns or issues arise.

<b>INSIDE</b>	
Board mission continues after 71 years.....	p 2
Nevada seniors resources .....	p 3
\$80,000 home repair scam busted.....	p 4
Contact the Nevada State Contractors Board.....	p 4

# Board mission continues after 71 years

The 1941 state legislature created the Nevada State Contractors Board to license and regulate contractors. Nevada requires licenses for all residential and commercial contracting. The Board is empowered to determine applicant qualifications and establish license conditions, including a monetary limit and types of work that may be performed.

The Board also is charged with promulgating rules and regulations for implementation and enforcement of Nevada Revised Statute 624, which governs contractors. The Board is authorized to discipline licensees found in violation of the statute. The governor appoints seven Board members for three-year terms. Six members are licensed contractors, and one is a representative of the public.

Other Board duties include promoting public awareness and administering a homeowner recovery fund. The public awareness program creates and distributes informational material for consumers and contractors. Board employees deliver presentations and work with media to educate the public on the Board's mandate and to keep contractors and homeowners informed of their rights and responsibilities. The Residential Recovery Fund, established in 1999, provides financial assistance to single-family homeowners who have suffered

## Contractors Board hosts senior events

During October and November, the Nevada State Contractors Board conducted four Senior Awareness Programs. Partnering with state legislators and state agency representatives, the free Las Vegas, Boulder City, and Carson City events discussed scams that target seniors, identified the warning signs of a scam and provided contact information for reporting incidents of abuse. To schedule a Senior Awareness event for your group, contact Jennifer Turner at 702-486-1100.

damages in certain cases.

NSCB's primary purpose is to ensure consumer protection and the general health, safety and welfare of the public.

While regulators are often viewed as impediments to growth, the NSCB strives to be a catalyst for change, contributing to the betterment of the construction industry and its licensees, and helping to build more trusting relationships with the public. In doing so, the NSCB will protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Nevada while serving the public quickly and efficiently.

## Mission

The Nevada State Contractors Board is committed to promote the integrity and profes-

sionalism of the construction industry in Nevada.

The Nevada State Contractors Board has the responsibility to promote quality construction by Nevada licensed contractors through a regulatory licensing system designed to protect the health, welfare, and safety of the public.

## Vision

The Nevada State Contractors Board strives to be a model regulatory agency, integrating efficiency with consumer protection. We are committed to exceptional customer service, fair and efficient licensure, and innovative educational and enforcement programs.

Our empowered employees are committed to public service and professional development, and work to promote a fair and competitive marketplace.

## Values

The Nevada State Contractors Board strives for the highest program quality. We commit to uphold the values of:

- *Fairness and Respect* - We treat all customers and colleagues in a fair and impartial manner and with dignity and compassion.
- *Honesty and Integrity* - We conduct ourselves professionally, ethically and hon-

**See "MISSION" on page 4**

# Resources assist Nevada's seniors

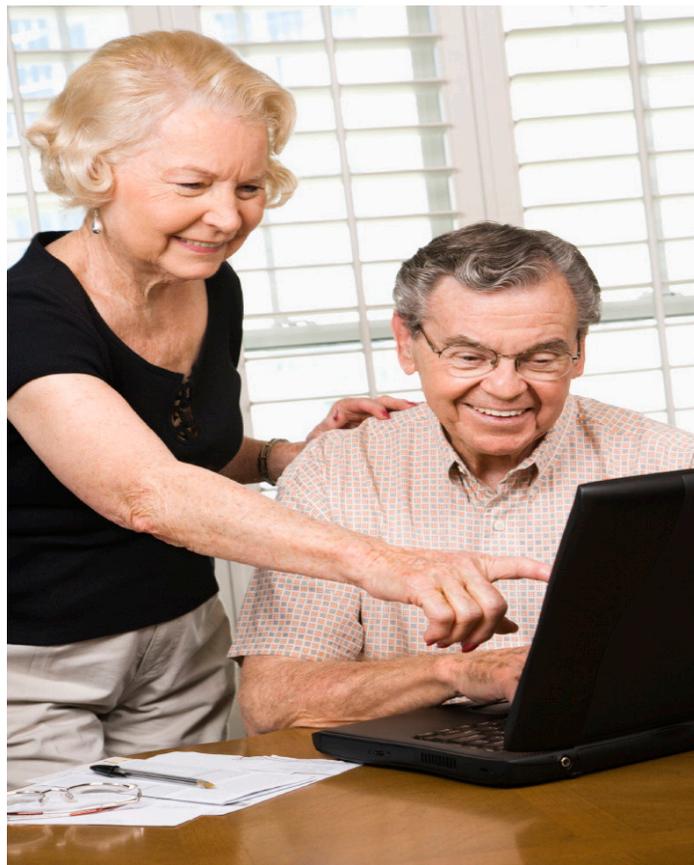
Nevada's state and local governments and several non-profit agencies provide programs to help senior citizens with a variety of issues related to aging, health, finance and advocacy.

The Nevada Department of Health and Human Services' [Agency on Aging](#) provides assistance and information on community services, including meals, legal aid, employment training, prescription payments, transportation, insurance fraud prevention, caregiver training, health information and support groups. The agency maintains offices in Carson City (775-687-4210); Elko (775-738-1966); Las Vegas (702-486-3545) and Reno (775-688-2964).

The [Nevada Aging and Disability Resource Center Program](#) is a collaborative effort of the Administration on Aging and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to help navigate the confusing world of federal health benefits. Call 702-486-3831.

[Washoe County Senior Services](#) helps older adults maintain independence, dignity, and quality of life for themselves and their caregivers. Programs include social services advocacy, case management, counseling and referral, legal consultation, nutrition, adult day care, and fitness and recreational programs. Programs are available in Reno (775-328-2575); Sparks (775-353-3110); Gerlach (775-557-2206) and Sun Valley (775-673-9417).

[Clark County Social Services' Senior Advocate Program](#) publishes *Royal Pages: A Directory of Programs and Services for the Senior and Disabled Population*. Of interest to homeowners are sections on HOA disputes, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department's crime and fraud prevention task force, disability housing, home repair and weatherization. The booklet also lists adult day care facilities, educational and employment opportunities, legal, financial and nutritional assistance and much more. Call (702-455-7051).



[HELP of Southern Nevada](#) serves the poor, the homeless and those in crisis navigate the road to self-sufficiency. The agency provides short-term financial assistance for people facing housing and medical emergencies. It also administers community-service programs for adult and juvenile offenders and helps senior citizens address home weatherization issues. (702) 369-4357.

[Rebuilding Together](#) provides free home repairs and accessibility modifications for low-income homeowners. It works to preserve affordable home ownership by bringing volunteers and communities together to improve the residences of seniors, disabled Americans, veterans and families of active duty service members, individuals and multi-generational families. (702) 259-4900 (Southern Nevada); (775) 853-5657 (Northern Nevada).

# Unlicensed contractor pleads guilty

Luigi Rossi of Indian Hills has been convicted on one count of contracting without a license after accepting a plea agreement in East Fork Justice Court. The guilty plea culminates an extensive investigation by the Nevada State Contractors Board. Rossi received a 30-day suspended jail sentence and was ordered to pay more than \$8,000 in investigative costs, fines and restitution.

NSCB opened an investigation after a family member complained her 87-year-old great uncle had paid Rossi – who operates Reliable Handyman Service, LLC – more than \$80,000 for construction work at his home in Gardnerville. The work included installation

of a gas fireplace, hardwood flooring and walk-in bathtub as well as construction of decks and an enclosed sunroom including electrical and plumbing work. Two separate contracts, both for several thousand dollars, were well in excess of the \$1,000 exemption for handyman services. These projects require a Nevada contractor's license, which Rossi does not possess. The fireplace, flooring and tub were never delivered or installed.

During their inquiries, investigators discovered additional Rossi victims, including relatives of the original complainant. Those victims, who are also senior citizens, paid Rossi \$2,185 to construct two

exterior stairways and landings and make small repairs and maintenance at their home in Gardnerville. Again, these projects require a contractor's license.

The third case involved a contract between Rossi, dba Reliable Handyman Service and a senior citizen homeowner in Stateline. The project, the construction of two decks at a cost of \$4,780, requires a C3 carpentry contractor's license, which Rossi does not possess.

Victims in the final two cases will receive restitution under the plea deal. The homeowner in the first case testified that he does not believe he has been taken advantage of and seeks no restitution.

## MISSION, from page 2

orably. We go beyond the legal minimum to do what is right.

- *Trust* - We are reliable, dependable and accountable. We strive to build and maintain public and industry trust through honesty, sincerity and by playing by the rules.
- *Excellence & Exceptional Customer Service* - The way we conduct business is as important as the business we conduct. We strive to deliver the best possible service, to create quality outcomes and to exceed expectations.

- *Innovation and Creativity* - We encourage innovation and promote excellence through learning and development. We are flexible and creative, adapting to changing customer needs and pursuing novel solutions.
- *Open, Clear and Frequent Communication* - We build partnerships and engage with customers in meaningful interactions. We believe in open communication, participatory governance and transparency.
- *Education* - We promote and encourage education of consumers, contractors and our employees.

# Contact NSCB!

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## HENDERSON

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