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February 19, 2007

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YoU RAT Arrests 60th Unlicensed Contractor

Daily Democrat

This month the Yolo Unlicensed Response Apprehension Team, otherwise known as "YoU RAT," made its 60th unlicensed contractor arrest.

The team is comprised of the Yolo County District Attorney's Fraud Investigators Office, Yolo County Code Enforcement, local law enforcement, the California State Contractors Board and the Department of Insurance Investigators. It identifies unfair business practices that occur with unlicensed contractors, businesses and trades in Yolo County.

Legal contractors who pay workers' compensation insurance, a minimum wage and all required licensing and permitting fees are frequently undercut through unfair competition by unlicensed operators that do not pay workers' compensation insurance, pay cash to employees "under the table," and do not maintain required licenses and permits," according to Yolo County Public Information Officer Beth Gabor.

Arrested on Feb. 7, was YoU RAT's 60th unlicensed contractor.

A resident of Sacramento County, David Forristall, in addition to contracting without a license, was wanted for numerous misdemeanor warrants in other counties and a no-bail DUI warrant.

Forristall's arrest occurred during the fourth organized YoU RAT sting in Yolo County since September 2006.

YoU RAT stings have taken place over the last six months throughout Yolo County, according to Gabor, including the unincorporated area of the county and the cities of West Sacramento, Winters and Woodland.

As a result of these efforts, Yolo County Code Enforcement Officer Heidi D'Agostino reports a lower prevalence of unlicensed contractors in the county and an increase number of businesses obtaining licenses through the county's business license program.

"Yolo County wants to help sustain as many businesses as we can here in the county," said D'Agostino. "However, the business climate must be fair for all. We can not allow one business or trade to ignore the law at the cost of those who are playing by the rules. We want to celebrate and encourage business growth that relies on doing things correctly, and prosecute those who are not."

You may anonymously report unlicensed contractor activities to YoU RAT via D'Agostino at 666-8777 or heidi.dagostino@yolocounty.org.

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