



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

Sharon Jensen
County Administrator

Beth Gabor
Public Information Officer

625 Court Street, Room 202 • Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 666-8150 • FAX (530) 668-4029
www.yolocounty.org

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Contact: Beth Gabor, Public Information Officer
(530) 666-8042 [w] • (530) 219-8464 [c]

YoU RAT Arrests More Unlicensed Contractors

(Woodland, CA) – The Yolo Unlicensed Response Apprehension Team (YoU RAT) has made eleven more arrests of unlicensed contractors in a recent two-day sting operation, bringing their total arrests up to 71.

Yolo County was one of seven counties invited to participate in the two-day sting operation called California Blitz which was coordinated by the Contractors State license Board (CSLB). Members of CSLB's statewide investigative fraud team, working with local law enforcement, posed as homeowners and invited suspected unlicensed contractors to bid on various construction jobs. Those contractors who bid more than \$500 were arrested. Charges for unlicensed contractors carry a maximum \$1,000 fine or six months in jail for a first offense.

Under state law, contractors who are paid more than \$500 must be licensed. Unlicensed operators frequently do not pay workers' compensation insurance, minimum wages, or permitting fees. They create unfair competition to licensed contractors who do carry insurance and who do pay the required fees and wages. Furthermore, unlicensed contractors are more prone to become involved with fraud, perform substandard work, or fail to complete the work for which they were paid. Often homeowners are left with unfinished work and have no recourse for recouping their losses.

According to CSLB the sting was designed to send a message to contractors that a license is required to bid for jobs over \$500, and to remind homeowners of the importance of hiring only properly licensed contractors.

“Our message is getting out there and our message is clear,” notes Heidi D’Agostino, Yolo County Code Compliance Officer. “If you are unlicensed you are unfairly competing with those that are and you can expect more stings in the future. You need to get your license”

D’Agostino reports the renewal rates for contractors of their Yolo County business license is 95% for 2007, an increase of 40% over last year at this time.

A contractor’s license can be verified by calling (800) 321-CSLB or visiting <http://www.cslb.ca.gov>. You may anonymously report unlicensed contractor activities to YoU RAT via Heidi D’Agostino at (530) 666-8777 or heidi.dagostino@yolocounty.org.

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