



News Release

NEVADA STATE CONTRACTORS BOARD
CALIFORNIA CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD
www.nscb.nv.gov • www.cslb.ca.gov

Sting photos available on CSLB's Facebook Page:
<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.360848333968470.88997.113678485352124&type=1>
(contact Venus for JPEG copies)

May 18, 2012

CSLB #11-16

Media Contacts

California Contractors State License Board: Melanie Bedwell (916) 255-1741
Venus Stromberg (916) 255-1831
Nevada State Contractors Board: Jennifer Turner (702) 486-1139
Ranya Botros (702) 486-1165

Second Annual Cal-Neva Border Blitz Nets 16 Phony Contractors

California and Nevada contractor boards take aim at underground economy on both sides of the state line

SACRAMENTO – The [California Contractors State License Board](#) (CSLB) and [Nevada State Contractors Board](#) (NSCB) conducted their second annual simultaneous enforcement operation on May 16, 2012, sending 11 people to court in El Dorado County, California and five in Douglas County, Nevada, for contracting without a license and related violations of home improvement contracting law. The sting operations were conducted at a single family home in the Tallac Park area of [South Lake Tahoe](#), California while the other was in a vacant business property at a [Stateline, Nevada](#) strip mall.

In both operations, investigators from CSLB's Statewide Investigative Fraud Team (SWIFT) and the Nevada Board posed as property owners who were seeking bids for [carpentry](#), [painting](#), and [landscaping](#). Some of the SWIFT investigators observed the Nevada operation, as did Nevada investigators at the California sting. Suspects who bid more than the legal limit for labor and materials were issued a notice to appear (NTA) in superior court.

It is against California law to contract for home improvement or construction jobs valued at \$500 or more for labor and materials without a state-issued contractor

license. In Nevada, it is illegal to contract for such jobs valued at more than \$1,000. California law also requires licensees to place their license number in all forms of advertising. Those who work on jobs valued at less than \$500 may advertise their services, but those ads must state that they are not a licensed contractor. Nevada prohibits anyone without a trade license to advertise for services. California and Nevada have a [reciprocity agreement](#), which simplifies the application process for contractors licensed in one state who want to seek a license in the other.

Individuals on probation for theft and burglary were among those who bid on the Lake Tahoe area projects. Michael D. Abbey, who bid on a painting job at the California sting site, was on probation for theft. Eric James Brown, who bid on cabinetry work at the South Lake Tahoe house, was accompanied by Tyson McKenrick. DCA investigators transported McKenrick to jail for a probation violation on a prior burglary conviction.

“These simultaneous sting operations help maximize CSLB’s reciprocity agreement and the cooperation among our two state boards, giving our investigators the opportunity to join forces against those engaged in underground economic activity on both sides of the state line,” said CSLB [Registrar Steve Sands](#). “It is important that those contracting for home improvement projects in both states comply with the laws of the state they are working in to protect consumers and law-abiding contractors.”

“The opportunity to join forces with California and combine our efforts to combat unlicensed contracting is a win-win for us all,” added NSCB Executive Officer Margi A. Grein. “We hope these events serve as a strong reminder that contracting without a license is not tolerated in either of our states, and that protecting the public from unscrupulous contractors continues to be our primary role and focus at the Board.”

Law enforcement backup was provided at the California sting site by the [El Dorado County District Attorney’s Office](#) and the Department of Consumer Affairs’ Division of Investigations.

The following suspects will be arraigned at the [El Dorado County Superior Court’s South Lake Tahoe Branch](#), and will be contacted later about their future court date:

SUSPECTS NAME	WORK CLASS	VIOLATIONS
Ruben Zavala Gonzalez	Landscaping	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Oscar Rojas Segura	Landscaping	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Juan Manuel Lopez Gomez	Landscaping	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
John Michael Troccoli	Painting	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Eric James Brown	Framing and Rough Carpentry	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising *Accompanied by Tyson McKenrick who was arrested for violating probation from a prior burglary conviction*
Juan Carlos Martinez-Munoz	Painting	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Michael D. Abbey	Painting	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising *On probation for theft*
Andrew James Bowen	Framing and Rough Carpentry	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Daniel Allen Brown	Framing and Rough Carpentry	Contracting without a license
John Thomas Saites	Painting	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Alonzo Sanchez-Ruelas	Landscaping	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising

The following suspects were cited in the Nevada sting operation:

SUSPECTS NAME ANDBUSINESS	WORK CLASS	VIOLATIONS
Sean Hilla Amazing Handyman Services	Painting and Carpentry	Contracting without a license
Michael Gonzales	Painting and Carpentry	Contracting without a license, advertising without a license
Edward Polaske Tahoe Technicians	Carpentry	Contracting without a license
Dan Chandler Top-Notch Home Repairs	Electrical and Plumbing	Contracting without a license, advertising without a license
Micky McFarren	Carpet and Carpentry	Contracting without a license, advertising without a license

CSLB and NSCB urge consumers to follow these tips before signing a contract for home improvement work:

- Only hire licensed contractors who hold a valid license in the state where the job will be done, and in the classification of the work to be undertaken.
- Always check the license number on [CSLB's](#) or [NCSB's](#) website to make sure the contractor's license is in good standing.
- Don't pay in cash, and don't let payments get ahead of the work.
- Get at least three bids, check references, and get a written contract.
- Do not sign a contract until you completely understand all its terms.

The Contractors State License Board operates under the umbrella of the California [Department of Consumer Affairs](#). More information and publications about hiring contractors are available on the CSLB website or by calling 800-321-CSLB (2752). You can also sign up for [CSLB email alerts](#). CSLB licenses and regulates California's 300,000 contractors, and is regarded as one of the leading consumer protection agencies in the United States. In fiscal year 2010-11, CSLB helped recover nearly \$45 million in ordered restitution for consumers.

The Nevada State Contractors Board is committed to protecting the public's health, safety, and welfare through licensing and regulation of the construction industry. Under Nevada Revised Statutes, a licensee is subject to disciplinary action by the Board for failure to comply with the requirements of the laws or regulations governing contractors. Violations may result in Board action against the contractor's license. The State Contractors Board has the power to regulate contractors and discipline licensees who violate [NRS 624](#). Disciplinary action may consist of a fine of up to \$10,000 per offense, order corrective action, suspension, revocation or other action.

###