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PRESS RELEASE

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Statewide “California Blitz” Sting Comes to Chico

The Contractors State License Board’s (CSLB) Statewide Investigative Fraud Team (SWIFT) teamed with investigators from the Butte County District Attorney’s Office as part of its spring “California Blitz” that included two-day sting operations in seven cities from Chico to Murrieta (Riverside County). The sting conducted at a Humboldt Avenue home in Chico produced 11 of the 110 state-wide notices to appear in court during the March 14-15, 2012 operation.

CSLB investigators invited suspected unlicensed contractors to bid on landscaping, tree trimming, fencing, and concrete work. Those who bid more than \$500 for labor and materials at the Chico house were issued a notice to appear for contracting without a license. Some face additional charges for failure to carry workers’ compensation insurance, soliciting excessive down payments, and illegal advertising.

Many homeowners are unaware of the serious financial loss and risk of worker injury on their property, including potential liability for injuries sustained by laborers not covered by workers’ compensation insurance. Many also do not know that it is illegal to solicit or accept a down payment larger than 10 percent of the contract price, or \$1,000, whichever is less, for a home improvement contract.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said, “Homeowners need to be aware of the risk they take when they hire someone who is not licensed to do work in their home. What seems like a good deal almost always ends up costing a lot more. Many of these phony contractors are people you really don’t want inside your house or around your family.”

“CSLB is gratified for its partnership with the Butte County District Attorney and prosecutors’ offices throughout the state to achieve our goals of the “California Blitz” including drawing attention to these consumer protection laws, educating unlicensed workers about

contractor license law, and encouraging those who qualify to obtain their contractor license, “ said CSLB Registrar Steve Sands.

CSLB urges consumers to follow these tips before hiring anyone to work on their property:

- Hire only licensed contractors and ask to see their license and a photo ID to verify their identity.
- Always check the license number on CSLB’s website at www.cslb.ca.gov or www.CheckTheLicenseFirst.com to make sure the license is in good standing, and that there is workers’ compensation insurance coverage for employees.
- Don’t pay more than 10 percent or \$1,000 (whichever is less) as a down payment. There is an exception for about two dozen licensees who carry special bonds to protect consumers. These exceptions are noted on CSLB’s website.
- 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.

In addition to Chico, the two-day undercover stings took place in Clovis (Fresno County), Grover Beach (San Luis Obispo County), Lawndale (Los Angeles County), Murrieta (Riverside County), Redwood City (San Mateo County), and Visalia and Porterville (Tulare County).

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 also can 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.

Those cited in the Chico sting:

Suspect’s Name and Business	Age	Work Class	Violations
Carl Jeffrey Quandt Chico	49	Earthwork, Paving	Contracting without a license
Jay Kerby Ruff Oroville	28	Landscaping	Contracting without a license, failure of an unlicensed person to comply with a citation
Derek John Francyk Paradise	50	Painting	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising, no workers’ comp ins.
Scott Roberts Chico	48	Tree Services	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Angel Erwin Arrellano-Rivera Chico	39	Landscaping	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Gerardo Segura Uribe	46	Concrete	Contracting without a license, illegal

Oroville			advertising
Raymond Anderson Paradise	56	Fencing	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Anthony John Anderson Chico	25	Fencing	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Jordan Roscoe Borean Chico	25	Panting	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Jerald Lee Bennett Jr. Chico	46	Fencing	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising
Jason F. Mogavero Oroville	35	Landscaping	Contracting without a license, illegal advertising, no workers comp.