



# Butte County

LAND OF NATURAL WEALTH AND BEAUTY

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **UNDERGROUND ECONOMY SWEEP NETS SEVERAL**

A 57-year-old Oroville man posing as a licensed paving contractor but in reality using another man's contractor's license number was caught up in the latest District Attorney underground economy sweep yesterday. William Turner, doing business as Bill's Seal Coat, was caught on tape by undercover investigators making a bid for paving and stripping an Oroville motel parking lot. Turner was arrested on felony charges of fraudulent use of another's contractor license number as well as charges of contracting without a license and transported to Butte County Jail.

District Attorney Mike Ramsey said today that Turner was caught as part of a joint operation by the District Attorney Bureau of Investigation and the California Contractors State License Board targeting unlicensed and uninsured building contractors. At dawn yesterday, five teams of state and local investigators moved into all areas of Butte County making contact with workers at construction sites checking to determine if the contractor had a contractor's license and workers compensation insurance for all employees.

Ramsey said, "This was both a consumer and worker protection operation. It is vital people are protected from those who would pose as licensed contractors when they are not, and construction workers have the protection of workers compensation insurance if they are injured on the job."

Ramsey went on to say many people do not realize if they hire an unlicensed contractor to do work and one of the workers is injured, the home or business owner can be liable for the injured worker's medical costs. Alternatively, a licensed and insured building contractor will shield the home or business owner customer generally from liability for injured workers.

The operation was one of a number of like operations conducted randomly by the District Attorney and Contractors State License Board throughout the year. The goal is to both educate and enforce, and the consumer is the winner from the effort. Ramsey added most legally licensed and insured contractors welcome these enforcement efforts, as they feel unlicensed contractors have an unfair advantage in bidding for jobs because they do not pay the costs of insurance for their employees.

Dozens of construction sites were contacted resulting in the arrest of four people besides Turner. Most were given citations to later appear in court on the misdemeanor charges ranging from unlicensed contracting to not providing workers compensation insurance for their employee(s). Ramsey said Turner was the sole felony arrest.