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Gardnerville Homeowner Almost Victimized
By Traveling Unlicensed Contractors

An unsuspecting Gardnerville, NV, homeowner nearly became the victim of a classic door-to-door scam by unlicensed traveling contractors, were it not for the watchful eye and quick response of a NSCB criminal investigator.

Two traveling contractors with California licenses, **Aarow Asphalt, aka Arrow Asphalt**, license number 884797 (Earthwork & Paving) and **B W Blacktopping Contractors**, license number 912930 (Earthwork & Paving), both based in Wisconsin, allegedly knocked on the Nevada homeowner's door and said they worked for the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) and had some leftover asphalt to pave his 40-by-40 foot driveway. They allegedly said they would pave the driveway for \$7,200.

Unlicensed traveling contractors traditionally crisscross the United States in groups. Typically, they target the elderly with door-to-door solicitations, claiming to be in the neighborhood with leftover materials, quoting low prices and using high-pressure sales tactics. Historically, traveling contractors' workmanship is substandard and will deteriorate rapidly.

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Following a tip that these traveling contractors were in the Gardnerville area, a NSCB investigator searched the area and observed approximately seven to 10 out-of-state dump trucks with paving equipment parked next to a residence. The investigator informed the homeowner that the contractors were not licensed in Nevada. With assistance from the Carson City Sheriff's Office and the Carson City Business License Division, **Leonard J. Wells** was issued a criminal citation for *contracting without a license*.

Both Leonard J. Wells and a man alleged to be his partner, John Wells, were also encouraged to become properly licensed Nevada contractors.

In other recent stings:

Roberto Rivera-Castillo, dba, R & J Handyman, was advertising on a local Reno bulletin board that he could do painting, plumbing, flooring and cabinet installations. He provided a \$1,525.50 painting bid to a NSCB investigator and was immediately slapped with a criminal citation for *contracting without a license*. Upon being cited, he told the investigator that he was going to try and get his Nevada license.

Michael M. Sutton, dba Michael Sutton, Electrician, was surprised upon being issued a *contracting without a license* criminal citation for submitting a \$125 electrical bid to a NSCB investigator. He said, "I am a journeyman electrician. Why do I need a contractor's license?"

In reference to **NRS 624.031**, a Nevada Contractor's license is required unless:

5. Any work to repair or maintain property the value of which is less than \$1,000, including labor and materials, unless:
- (a) A building permit is required to perform the work;
 - (b) The work is of a type performed by a plumbing, electrical, refrigeration, heating or air-conditioning contractor...

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Armando Sanchez-Colin, dba Touch Up Painting, was issued a criminal citation for *contracting without a license* after submitting a \$1,800 painting bid to a NSCB investigator. He had been advertising his services on a local bulletin board in Reno.

“The paving scam investigation with the Carson City Sheriff’s Office and Business License Division are excellent examples of the commitment both state agencies and the NSCB have to protecting the public,” said Margi Grein, Executive Officer for the Board.

“The NSCB would like to thank these state agencies for their assistance and looks forward to an ongoing cooperative relationship.

“All these stings should serve as warnings that the NSCB is serious about cracking down on unlicensed contractors,” Grein added. “Consumers should not be taken in by promises of cheap work performed by unlicensed contractors. In reality it may cost more, and the consumer is left with little or no protection. It is important for consumers to check the license status of any company they wish to hire on our website at:

www.nscb.state.nv.us .”

Contracting without a license in Nevada is a misdemeanor for the first offense, a gross misdemeanor for the second offense and a Class E felony for the third offense. Homeowners who use unlicensed contractors are not eligible for the Residential Recovery Fund, and by law their contracts are null and void.

The NSCB urges consumers to follow these simple tips when dealing with a contractor:

- **Hire only licensed contractors. Ask to see their NSCB license.**
- **Don't rush into decisions or hire someone without checking out potential contractors.**
- **Be especially wary when approached by someone offering door-to-door home improvements.**
- **Verify the contractor's license by checking online at: www.nscb.state.nv.us or calling: (702) 486-1100 in Southern Nevada, or (775) 688-1141 in Northern Nevada.**
- **Ensure the contractor is properly licensed for the work you want done on your home.**
- **Limit your down payment or deposit to 10 percent of the total contract.**
- **Don't pay cash without obtaining signed receipts, and don't let the payments get ahead of the work.**

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