

Disaster kit supplies available

Southern Nevadans can get a leg up on building their own disaster preparedness kits by attending Clark County Fire Station 66's Fire Safety Day Open House from noon to 3 p.m. on Dec. 9. The station is located at 7929 Mountains Edge Pkwy. Additional items will be held and distributed at future similar events in northern and southern Nevada.

"We encourage residents to attend the event to obtain information on fire, flood and earthquake preparedness from the Office of Emergency Management," said Jennifer Lewis, Contractors Board public information officer. "We will also be there to provide tips on how to hire properly licensed contractors to repair property damaged by a disaster. Unscrupulous and unlicensed contractors may take advantage of homeowners in the wake of catastrophe. It's important to have an action plan when it comes time to contracting for emergency home repairs."

The items to be given away were collected by the Contractors Board and construction associations from across the state during September's National Disaster Preparedness Month.

"Nevada's varied climates and geographies make it uniquely vulnerable to a variety of natural and man-made disasters. From wildfires, flash floods, high winds and earthquakes to vandalism, human error and terrorism, severe property damage can occur at any moment and with no warning," Lewis said. "Weather events and public safety emergencies have the potential to require citizens to shelter in place or even evacuate their homes. Either way, people may be forced to survive without electricity, running water, adequate permanent shelter or access to medical assistance."



A properly packed preparedness kit can ameliorate the hardships a personal or widespread disaster can bring.

The construction community and Nevada's residents donated critical items such as bottled water, non-perishable food items, batteries, flashlights, first-aid kits; diapers; baby wipes; matches, dust masks, duct tape, whistles, garbage bags, multi-purpose tools; toiletries, cups, plates and utensils and more.

Participating organizations also served as donation-collecting centers:

- Nevada Builders Alliance Women's Council, Carson City
- Builders Association of Northern Nevada, Reno
- Associated Builders and Contractors of Nevada, Las Vegas
- National Association of Minority Contractors, Nevada chapter, Las Vegas
- Nevada Subcontractors Association, Las Vegas
- The Ferraro Group, Las Vegas

Seniors gain from helping others

NewsUSA – With years of experience and a willingness to make a difference in their communities, more older adults are volunteering to serve their peers in need. By doing so, they are staying active, meeting new people and learning new skills – all factors that contribute to health and longevity. But most importantly, they are making a difference in the lives of others.

Volunteers Making a Difference in the Lives of Older Adults, a new report from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), highlights five volunteer programs that are changing lives. These programs demonstrate how local Area Agencies on Aging across the country are innovating to meet critical needs and offer local seniors meaningful volunteer opportunities.

“My volunteer work has given me the opportunity to meet with some very inspirational people, whom I otherwise would have never been able to meet because they are home bound,” says one volunteer.”

The five volunteers highlighted in the n4a report represent thousands of older adult volunteers across the country who give their time and talents to ensure that other, older Americans live with dignity and choices in homes and communities for as long as possible. They may inspire you to volun-



teer your time and talents.

In Atlanta, trained volunteers teach health and wellness classes to their peers. The classes cover topics such as fitness, healthy sexuality, disaster preparedness and issues related to mental health. Program staff members report that most of their volunteer community educators are in their mid-60s with the most dedicated volunteers in their 70s and 80s. Veterans in Maine are volunteering to visit other veterans who are often isolated in rural communities. They swap stories and provide companionship. The volunteers also link their fellow veterans to social services and programs that address unmet needs.

“As Vets age, they seem to be forgotten. The need is huge for volunteer veterans to visit

and share life stories with other veterans,” says the program’s director.

Other senior volunteers across the country are staying active in their communities by making weekly phone calls to home bound seniors, helping seniors navigate public transportation, providing rides to medical appointments, and educating seniors about Medicare, among many other critical tasks. There is a role for everyone!

For more information about how you can volunteer, contact your local Area Agency on Aging or the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116. For a copy of the five case studies, visit www.n4a.org and find "Volunteer Resource Center" under n4a Initiatives.

Ex-solar firm executive indicted

Following an extensive investigation by the Nevada State Contractors Board's Fraud Division, the Grand Jury returned an indictment from the Clark County District Attorney's office against Drew Levy, former qualified employee and 30 percent owner of Summerlin Energy Las Vegas, LLC, on 18 felony counts as a result of theft and diversion of funds of homeowners between July 31, 2015 through February 24, 2016. Chief Deputy District Attorney J.P. Raman said more charges are likely.



Pro. Pro sustained 46 of 48 Causes of Action against Summerlin Energy for taking money without providing adequate work or materials, and failing to pay its vendors, which resulted in liens being placed on homeowner properties who had paid the company in full.

On August 4, 2016, the Board's Residential Recovery Fund Committee ordered \$400,000 in financial recourse be made to 133 homeowners damaged by Summerlin Energy – the maximum amount that can be paid in claims per contractor pursuant to Nevada Revised Statute 624.510.

The indictment alleges nine victims with an estimated loss of \$140,000, after they paid for the installation of solar panels and had no materials delivered or work performed on their home. A warrant for Levy's arrest was issued on September 7, and bail is set in the amount of \$500,000.

"The indictment of Drew Levy is a testament to the investigative efforts of George Lyford and Jack Snyder who led the fraud investigation for the Board," stated NSCB Executive Officer Margi Grein. "Our partnership with the Clark County District Attorney to bring Mr. Levy to justice is not only a win for the many homeowners and families affected by his actions, but for the public at-large. Let this be a strong message to other contractors who take advantage of the trust their customers place in them that any fraudulent actions will not be taken lightly."

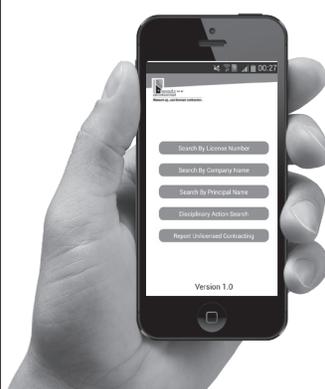
The Board's Fraud Unit investigated Levy in the wake of a March 31, 2016 disciplinary hearing where the licenses of Summerlin Energy were revoked by Administrative Law Judge Philip M.



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Battling the holiday blues

By William L. Smith, Ph. D.

The holiday season is upon us and the merriment and joy is a very exciting time for most people. However, for many individuals, the period between Thanksgiving through New Year's Day does nothing for them but bring on the blues. With holiday celebrations to attend and family gatherings to prepare for, the holiday season can be busy and joyful. But for others, unrealistic expectations and the stresses of holiday events can increase anxiety and cause depression.

This time of the year, in general, we are reminded of people we missed and reflecting on life not being what we would like it to be. The season triggers childhood memories and how things used to be. And, too often, people have a tendency to assign positive spin to things from the past and sometimes look back to their childhood and think wouldn't it be wonderful if things were like that again.

The elderly are particularly vulnerable especially if they are physically incapacitated or estranged from friends and family members. The holiday season is supposed to be a time of happiness and joy, but for many seniors this is far from their reality. For many seniors, feelings of sadness, loneliness and isolation are their holiday companions.

There are many factors that contribute to those feelings of sadness that seniors may experience. Many elders are widowed, have lost their close friends as they age, are separated from family and may be suffering with chronic illness. Too often, the elders may feel guilty for experiencing feelings of sadness and loneliness which may in

turn intensify those same feelings. To help cope with the holiday blues, seniors shouldn't isolate themselves. If you are unable to be with family than invite friends over to share the holiday spirits. Also volunteer your time helping others is a great way to forget your own troubles.

Thanksgiving is certainly the starting point for the season of blues, this is true for those who celebrate Christmas and for those individuals who do not. However, New Year's Eve can lead to intense sadness or profound depression and some individual may experience anxiety about New Year resolution making and looking back on the previous year can cause more anxiety. The season to be jolly can be a rude-awaken for people with limited coping skills, especially for those dealing with financial hardship. To spend beyond your means can certainly lead to depression.

Today's society in which individualism is highly valued, the holiday blues may hit more people harder because we live more isolated lives. In far too many cases, we drive up to our houses, wave to our neighbors, push the garage remote and vanish inside our homes. We are captive to technology and rather email people than talk to them face-to-face. We must make time ... we must make the effort and reach out to others, human beings need a sense of belonging; We are tribal by nature.

The best cure for the holiday blues is a strong dose of getting together with friends, sharing the seasonal blues or get high on volunteerism.

Dr. William Smith is a psychotherapist with many years experience working with depressed clients.

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