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Sheriff Warns of Repair and Construction Scams

Sheriff Tommy Allen writes: We have recently seen an increase in the number of complaints regarding construction and repair scams. The problems have not been shoddy workmanship or overcharges, which have historically been issues. Now the problem is simply no work at all.

Typically, the homeowner has contracted either verbally or in a written contract for certain repairs or construction to be done. A partial payment is made up front to the contractor. But then the contractor delays, delays, delays with various excuses why he has not started the job. Finally, the contractor disappears. The home owner has nothing to show for his efforts; the money and the contractor are gone. Often times, the home owner has only a verbal agreement with nothing in writing and only the name of the so called contractor, which is often fictitious. Remember, anyone can get a business card or a contract printed up. These are difficult situations to solve. This may be either a civil or criminal matter, depending on a number of circumstances.

Individuals who need construction or repairs should make some efforts to make sure those they are dealing with are legitimate. They should seek advice from neighbors, friends or co-workers. Here are some recommendations that may reduce your chances of becoming a victim of construction and repair scams:

1. Use a local construction company or individual who has a long record of local work. Go see some of their work. Are they listed in the local telephone directory?
2. Get a written agreement that states clearly the exact costs, the work to be performed and completion dates.
3. Don't make a down payment before the work begins, unless you know the contractor and they have a good solid record of legitimate work. Make payments as work is completed. Never make a final payment until all work is completed.
4. If something doesn't seem just right after work has begun, write down the tag numbers of vehicles used by the contractor onsite. Contact your local building inspector or law enforcement agency.
5. Be wary of a contractor who contacts you looking for work, or who tries to rush you into agreeing to a job he claims needs to be done.

It is simply good business sense to be sure you are dealing with a legitimate company or individual. Honest companies or individuals will not mind you checking on them. Others will and will quickly disappear. It will save you a lot of grief and expense.

Prevent Summertime Tragedies: Never Leave Children Unattended in Cars

Insurance Commissioner Jim Long and Safe Kids North Carolina (SKNC) reminds parents and caregivers to never leave children unattended in vehicles, even for just a few minutes. Every year an average of 33 children in the United States die from heatstroke after being left unattended in a vehicle; since 2000, at least eight children in North Carolina have died from heat exposure after being left in a car unattended.

Temperatures inside a car can quickly reach up to 180 F degrees on a hot, sunny day, even up to 100 F degrees on a mild or cloudy day. Contrary to popular belief, cracking the windows does not significantly affect interior temperature. Unlike adults, children's bodies are not as capable of regulating body temperature in extreme heat. In fact, a young child's core body temperature increases three to five times faster than an adult's.

"It's never a good idea to leave children unattended in cars, especially the weather warms up here in North Carolina," said Commissioner Long. "Not only can kids suffer heatstroke, but they could also accidentally put the car in gear, release the emergency brake or worse. Take the few extra minutes to unbuckle your child and take her into the store, gas station or wherever you're going." Commissioner Long serves as the state chair of SKNC.

- Follow these tips to protect your kids this summer:
- Never leave a child alone in a vehicle.
 - When parking your vehicle at home, always lock car doors and trunks, and keep keys out of children's reach. Teach children that cars are not places to play.
 - Watch children closely around cars, particularly when loading and unloading.
 - Make sure that all children leave the vehicle with you when you reach your destination. Don't forget sleeping infants.
 - Busy parents have a lot of their minds, so give yourself a reminder. Get in the habit of placing your purse, briefcase or other important items in the backseat next to your child's car seat. That way you'll remember to check the back before leaving the car.
 - If you see a child or pet left unattended in a vehicle, call 911 immediately.

PPES EOG Awards



Peachland-Polkton Elementary School held an End-of-Grade (EOG) award assembly on Friday, June 6. Students in grades three through six, who had met various requirements pertaining to the EOGs, such as perfect attendance during EOG week, no discipline referrals, EOG growth, etc., earned tickets to be placed in a drawing. Among the prizes were money and an inflatable boom box and chair. Over 50 students won prizes!

Pictured are the top prize winners during the drawing. They are, from left, Macy Austin, Trent Ward, Vashone Bivens, Karmen Dawkins and Natalie Smith.

Top Ten Juniors Receive Anson's Junior Marshal Honors



The Anson High School Junior Marshals, those students making up the top ten positions in their class, are pictured front, from left: Callie Herring, Anna Tucker, Danielle Wright-Chief, Rachel Huntley-Co-Chief and Callie Ricketts. Back, Courtney Jackson, Chelsea Landis, Will Gullledge, Joshua Jarman and Brittany Tyson. Photo by Melanie Morse

"Anyone Can Be a Father; it Takes Someone Special to be a Dad"

According to American history, "Father's Day is a secular celebration inaugurated in the early twentieth century to celebrate fatherhood and parenting by males, and to honor and commemorate fathers." Father's Day is celebrated on a variety of dates worldwide and typically involves gift-giving and family-oriented activities. Here in the United States we as Americans celebrate fathers on the third Sunday in June, which this year falls on June 15.

The old truism, "Anyone can be a father but it takes someone special to be a dad," is spot on. Dad, as quoted above, obviously means someone special. So let's try and name the dads we know, love and respect who are truly special fathers. There's Alan, Betty, Charlie, Dennis, Eric, Frank, Greg, Hugh, Isaac, Jim, Kyle, Luke, Michael, Nate, Otis, Pete, Quinn, Ris, Stanly, Terry, Ulysses, Vincent, Wilton, Xavier, Yong and Zach, to list a few, but of course there are hundreds of thousands more, thus the reason for the celebration honoring them all.

In my A-Z listing, you may believe there's a typo. Betty is not a typical man's name but rather, as most of you know from my writings, my mother. I often refer to her as my greatest teacher, but I've never told you that I consider her when identifying my father. As a single mother of five, she performed both parental roles and I find it only befitting to celebrate that twin task on father's day in addition to mother's day. After all, only two days of celebrating her lifelong challenge of dual parenting still seems a bit trivial in comparison.

"The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother," said Henry Ward Beecher, and I couldn't agree more. The family unit can be preserved with much greater fervor when both parents work together to bring up the child in the way God intended, too bad for the children that's not always the case.

So I tip my hat to those great men out there who find themselves in the role of "dad," special father to their children. I see them often; respect them always, remember them fondly, and envy their children, for in my heart is a void never to be filled, leaving me both happy and sad on this occasion. Understanding that circumstances you grow up with serve only to make you stronger and wiser, I accept that and move forward, but do, once in a while look back and wish...

So to those of you with both parents in your lives, rejoice, you are some of the most blessed people on Earth. And to you dads who have prominent places in the hearts and lives of your children, you stand as tall and as grand Mt. Everest.

Happy Father's Day to all dads, daddy's or whatever your adorable guys and dolls say when they need you, want you, love you or even expect you. When they speak to you, shout to you, scream at you, or crawl up into your lap and whisper into your ear, "Happy Father's Day Dad," realize you are most deserving of this special mark on the calendar and ultimately the feeling that clutches your heart when you hear those words. Obviously, you've done a great job with your children, your wives, and your family. Keep up the inspiring work dads and happy, happy Father's Day! *By Melanie Morse*

Drive \$marter Challenge

The Alliance to Save Energy and 17 additional diverse public and private-sector partners are launching the Drive \$marter Challenge, a fuel-efficiency campaign to help U.S. consumers lower their gasoline costs by using less. The campaign offers effective money and gas-saving tips in English and Spanish, and extensive additional resources - all aimed at keeping more money in drivers' pockets and reducing the number of costly trips to the pump.

The unique Drive \$marter Challenge campaign features many creative elements, including an interactive website, cards, humorous radio public service ads, a Driving and Saving jingle, and mobile marketing. In addition, campaign partners and other supporters will be broadly disseminating campaign tips and resources. With the summer driving season about to begin, the campaign is timely in helping consumers, who are seeing their family budgets eroded by high gas prices. All this information can reduce consumers' gas costs by hundreds of dollars yearly from the whopping \$3,400 that the average U.S. household is projected to spend this year to fuel its vehicles.

The campaign has the only interactive website (www.drivesmarterchallenge.org) with a calculator allowing drivers to enter specific data on their vehicle (make, model, year, cylinders) and find out exactly how much money they can save with up to six easy vehicle maintenance and sensible driving steps. To highlight the campaign's social aspect, the calculator also displays a running tally of the cumulative money, gallons, and CO2 emission savings of everyone who has "taken the Challenge" by pledging to follow through on any or all of those fuel-saving steps. The calculator thus demonstrates that even small fuel-efficiency steps by large numbers of people add up to measurable benefits. As a reward, each visitor committing to the Challenge can download one or more money-saving coupons for vehicle maintenance products - including oxygen sensors, air filters, and spark plugs - redeemable from a campaign partner.

The campaign website also features links to extensive resources ranging from where to find the cheapest local gas to information on public transportation, biking, car sharing, and carpooling.

The National Association of Counties (NACo), a campaign partner, is challenging its members to see which county in each of three population size categories can get the highest percentage of residents to take the Drive \$marter Challenge. Each of the three winning county municipalities will receive 1,000 bottles of Fuel Additive/Cleaner - products applied to the fuel system to help vehicles be more fuel-efficient. Anson County is participating.

The Alliance to Save Energy and their 17 campaign partners are joining together in helping American families cut their vehicle fuel costs. On a broader scale, the campaign will enhance U.S. energy security by reducing dependence on imported oil, and it will improve the global environment by reducing CO2 emissions.

Get involved in the Drive \$marter Campaign. Spread the Drive \$marter message and encourage neighbors and employees to access www.drivesmarterchallenge.org to learn how they can save money by being more fuel efficient.

By Janine Rywak, County Extension Director

Library Launches Summer Reading Program

Join "Catch the Reading Bug!" this summer at the Hampton B. Allen Library and discover the amazing world of insects. The 2008 Summer Reading Program is open to all young people, preschool through young adult, with programs, prizes, story hours and more.

Registration for the Summer Reading Program begins on Thursday, June 12. The first program, entitled "Orkin Man," will begin that day at 10 a.m. All programs are free. For more information call the library at 704-694-5177.

Here is the schedule of programs:

- June 12 - Orkin Man
- June 19 - Planetarium (Holly)
- June 26 - The Bee Man (Tucker TV)
- July 10 - Wendy
- July 17 - Captain D's
- July 24 - Ronald McDonald
- July 31 - Bojangles
- August 4 - Bug Catchers
- August 7 - A Walk in the Woods

Mobile Food Pantry Coming Tuesday, June 17

Free groceries will be available to those in need. The Mobile Food Pantry is coming to the Burnsville Fire Department on Highway 742 in Burnsville on Tuesday, June 17 at 11 a.m.

Please bring bags or carts with you to carry your food. Do Not arrive before 9:30 a.m. If it is raining significantly the day of or the day before the delivery, it will be canceled. If you have not yet done so, you must bring proof of your income. You can only pick up food for yourself and one other household.

This event is sponsored by W.A.C.O.M. and local United Methodist Churches. Information is available from Reverend Norman Jones at 704-848-4694.

Look inside for these special inserts

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- Pizza Hut