



January 6, 2010

### **Upcoming Ohio Valley NARI Events**

**January 14, 2010:** Ohio Valley NARI will be promoting its first Membership Open House of the year hosted by Building Value. Building Value's new location is 4040 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati. There is no cost for this event and the topic of the program will be Green Building. The program will begin at 6:00 p.m. and will wrap up no later than 9:00 p.m. Please visit [www.naricincinnati.org](http://www.naricincinnati.org) or call 1.800.498.NARI and register today!

**Special Seminar: February 10, 2010 - 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m:** Ohio Valley NARI along with Roth & Associates will be presenting a Sandler Sales Training Program. Highlights: Why salespeople fail... and what to do about it. • How traditional sales practices turn salespeople into unpaid consultants. • How to get to the real decision maker. • How to touch 100% of your desirable opportunities, 100% of the time. • Why everyone looks busy, but sales remain low. • Do your salespeople have what it takes to succeed in today's volatile economy and marketplace? • Is your sales management strategy and structure optimized to produce the results YOU need to succeed? For more information or to register visit [www.naricincinnati.org](http://www.naricincinnati.org)

### **EPA Proposes to Expand Lead Monitoring**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it is proposing to expand the lead air quality monitoring network to ensure that the most vulnerable Americans are protected from exposure to lead. Even at low levels, exposure to lead can impair a child's IQ, learning capabilities, memory and behavior.

EPA is proposing to require air quality monitoring around sources that emit a half ton or more of lead a year, lowering the current threshold from one ton a year to include more sources. The proposal also modifies the current requirement for monitoring in larger urban areas. Monitors would be placed at each of the multi-pollutant monitoring stations being established in urban and rural areas.

These changes would allow monitoring at the largest sources of lead emissions and would more accurately track long-term trends and assess typical lead levels in communities throughout the country.

This proposal is in response to a petition for reconsideration requesting EPA to reevaluate the air monitoring requirements finalized in 2008 along with the tightened national air quality standards for lead.

EPA is not reconsidering, nor is it delaying the implementation of, the 2008 lead standards. States will still need to deploy lead monitors around sources emitting at least one ton of lead a year by January 1, 2010. For details on the potential impact of 2008 lead monitoring rules on protective coatings work, see the May 2009 JPCL, "An Update on Regulatory Action Affecting Maintenance Painting Work," pp. 66-69.

Lead emitted into the air can be inhaled or can be ingested after it settles. Ingestion is the main route of human exposure. Children are the most susceptible because they are more likely to ingest lead, and their bodies are developing rapidly. There is no known safe level of lead in the body.

EPA will accept comments on the proposal for 45 days after it is published in the *Federal Register*.

Although the proposed rule has not yet been published in the *Federal Register*, a copy is available at <http://epa.gov/air/lead/pdfs/20091223MonitoringProposal.pdf>.

### **Angie's List Calls for Uniformity, Enforcement, Consumer Protection in Contractor Licensing** By: *Lauren Hunter*

Angie's List founder Angie Hicks is in the process of calling on state lawmakers around the country to enact uniform and understandable trade licensing laws. The goal is to create laws that give consumers an assurance that anyone holding a license is qualified to do the job it covers. Hicks is also asking lawmakers to set aside a portion of licensing fees for consumer protection funds so that homeowners who are bilked by licensed contractors can recover their lost investments. Hicks will be sending letters to governors across the country outlining the need for better trade licensing laws.

"Most trade licensing is too complicated and offers too little enforcement or protection," Hicks said in a press release. "Homeowners should be able to trust that if a governmental body has given a license to a contractor, that the contractor is reliable and qualified. They should also have access to some recompense if they rely on a licensed contractor who doesn't deliver, or worse yet, cheats them."

### **Angie's List Companies Required to Comply**

Hicks's call for better laws around the country coincides with a strengthening of Angie's List policies about trade licensing. The organization, which allows consumers to post ratings of local service companies, has been in business since 1995. Traditionally, the company has relied on service providers to list their trade license status and has asked members to verify that status on their own.

"Licensing laws vary greatly across the country and even among cities within the same state, which makes it hard for contractors to keep track of what's required and what isn't," Hick said. "Consumers don't have a chance of figuring it out without help. Consumers are still responsible for determining the license status of the contractors they hire, and Angie's

List will be working to make it easier for them. But the key to really accomplishing a better system will fall to lawmakers.”

While lawmakers may debate how to -- or if they should -- address the issue in their state, Angie's List is now requiring companies on the List to attest that they are in compliance with state and local laws. Like the IRS, Angie's List will audit contractors to verify that they are following the law. Those found to be out of compliance will have an opportunity to comply or will face actions from Angie's List that will include alerting members to their true status.

Angie's List communications director Cheryl Reed tells REMODELING that the auditing efforts are a huge undertaking for Angie's List. "Before we made the announcement, we reached out to our companies, explained our efforts, and asked them to contact us," Reed says. "Our first wave will be to let them know what's going on and gather information, then we'll post our findings. The accountability process has always included human review, and this is a huge undertaking. That's an indication as to why it hasn't happened before -- it's really complex."

With a process that already includes accountability and company review, and now the infrastructure in place to handle the volume of work, Reed says that Angie's List is well positioned to get started.

### **States' Responses Will Take Time**

Hicks said that it would be unrealistic to expect all states to adopt the same uniform licensing law that requires minimum training and qualifications, proper enforcement, and consumer protection. A state-by-state approach is likely more realistic. "Even if each state has different trade licensing laws, having one direction per state to follow would be better than the mishmash we have now," she said.

Most states issue licenses for at least some contractors, including plumbers, electricians, heating and cooling specialists, handymen, builders, and remodelers. However, the complexity of the issue is laid out in the September issue of the Angie's List Magazine:

- 15 states have state licensing only
- 10 states have state licensing and registration
- 9 states have state licensing, as well as local licensing
- 4 states have state licensing and local registration
- 2 states have state licensing, as well as local licensing and local registration
- 4 states have state licensing and registration, as well as local licensing
- 1 state has state registration and local licensing
- 4 states (including Washington, D.C.) have local licensing only
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*Source: Angie's List research of continental U.S. trade licensing laws*

“A current trade license won't guarantee that your contractor will complete your job perfectly, but it will give you some insight into how your contractor handles his or her

business,” Hicks said. “In communities where licensure is required, unlicensed contractors are breaking the law. If he or she breaks this one, what others will they break? If the contractor doesn’t know he or she needs a license to operate, what does that say about how on top of things he or she is?”

In most states, a valid license indicates that the holder carries insurance and workers’ compensation, but you still need to be sure the contractor has adequate -- and the right kind of -- insurance. In many cases, only licensed contractors are allowed to pull permits. If your contractor wants you to pull permits for your project, you should consider that a red flag and investigate further, Hicks said.

Contractors cannot acquire a rating on Angie's List until a member of Angie's List reports on his/her interaction with the company. Once a company is added to the List, Angie's List contacts the company to provide information to be displayed in its profile for member review that includes whether the company is licensed and bonded and insured, as well as contact information and other details that members find helpful.

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