

Protect Yourself Against Electrical Scams

If your home needs electrical work, be smart and cautious. There are a small number of companies in the Portland area who are engaging in illegal practices, often overcharging consumers by huge amounts. The Oregon-Columbia Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) recently assisted the Oregon Attorney General's office with their investigation of these scams in the electrical industry. NECA provided information which the organization had been compiling on the unscrupulous practices to the Attorney General's office, served as consultants during the investigation, and provided a standard of conduct against which the attorney General's office was able to measure the contractors they were investigating.

To protect yourself from such illegal and unethical practices, here are some tips from the Oregon-Columbia Chapter of NECA and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 48P:

1. Always get at least two comprehensive bids on the work you need done. "And be sure to get your quotes in writing," advises Geoff Gotham, Vice President of NECA-member Rose City Electric. "Then, when you're ready to actually have the work

done, a contract which clearly spells out everything is your best bet." In addition, there is no need to pay a fee for any estimate. "Very, very few professional contractors would ask a fee for an estimate," comments Vicky Bacon, Vice President of Marketing for Christenson Electric. "All the contractors I know of provide free estimates."

2. If you're calling an electrical contractor from a telephone directory ad, check to see the Oregon Construction Contractor's Board (CCB) number is in the ad. Legally, it should be. Then you can check with the Oregon State Board of Contractors to make sure the contractor is licensed to do business in Oregon. If the number is not listed in the ad, ask for it. You can also check the ad, or ask, to make sure the contractor is licensed, bonded, and insured.

3. Be cautious when you see a large telephone director ad with many phone numbers listed. Listing multiple numbers does not necessarily mean that contractor actually has a location in your area. The number may all be directed to one central number. "You really can't judge the size of a company by the quantity of telephone numbers they list in an ad," says Timothy Gauthier, Executive

Manager of NECA. "As a matter of fact, the largest contractor in the city only has one number." "You may also want to be cautious if the company doesn't list a street address," adds Jim Ferris, of NECA-member of Red's Electric and Past President of the Oregon Remodeler's Association.

4. Contact the Better Business Bureau for a report on the contractor you're considering. For your convenience, the BBB system is now automated. All you have to do to get a report is to enter the telephone number of the business you wish to inquire about.

5. Find out if the contractor is a member of a self-policing organization such as NECA and IBEW. That information may be listed in their ad, or you can ask for it on the phone. Not only do these types of organizations hold their members to high standards of ethical conduct and expertise, but a company's membership in these organizations provides you with another place to check credentials.

6. Call the Oregon-Columbia chapter of NECA for a listing of member contractors in your area. NECA will gladly provide you with the names of professional member contractors in your area who do the type of work you need. You may contact NECA at

(503) 233-5787.

7. You may also wish to get references from the electrical contractor you're considering. Usually references are selected that are similar to the one a particular customer needs done.

8. You should never feel threatened or uncomfortable for any reason. If you do, call someone else. Professional contractors, especially contractors who do a lot of residential work, are very sensitive to the fact that they are working in someone's home. The want you to have a positive experience and will work to accommodate your needs.

9. Be wary of false discounts. And be especially wary of discounts offered to senior citizens. Remember... your best bet is to get two or more comprehensive bids for the specific work you need done. When you do, you may find that the so-called discount was no discount at all.

10. Don't let yourself be rushed. Sometimes unscrupulous companies pressure consumers to agree to the work immediately because "we might not be available later." The best advice? Take your time. There are enough professional local contractors and electricians in the area to do your job on your schedule.

BIDS/SUB-BIDS

Port of Portland Request For Proposals Provide Travel Agency Services

Proposals to provide travel agency services for the organization will be received by the Contracts and Procurement Office, 15th floor, 700 N.E. Multnomah Street, Portland, OR 97232 (mailing address: P.O. Box 3529, Portland, OR 97208) until 4 p.m., September 2, 1994.


Scope:

To provide travel agency services for the organization including preparation and delivery of air tickets, hotel reservations and car rentals. The Port has particular needs that can be best met by a travel agency that makes service the most important aspect of handling a commercial account. Cost savings and value for the travel dollar are also important and will be considered in the final selection.

The contract is for a base term of one year, plus two one-year options exercisable unilaterally by the Port.

All proposals must be on the regular proposal form which is provided in the RFP contract manual, Section 5. RFP contract manuals are available at the above office of the Port.

Technical questions pertaining to this RFP should be directed to Janet Hutchins at (503) 731-7550.

 **Port of Portland**
Ronald Stempel, Manager
Contracts and Procurement

Sub-Bids Requested

For
Ambulatory Research & Education Center
Oregon Health Sciences University
Portland, Oregon

Bid Package 5 - Mechanical & Electrical
Bid Date: August 30, 1994
Bid Time: 2:00 PM

Bid proposals must be delivered to Hoffman Construction Co., 1300 SW Sixth Ave, 4th Floor, Portland Oregon. Bids may be delivered via telephone at 503-221-8811 or Fax at 503-221-8934.

All bid proposals must be in writing and be received prior to the bid date and time listed above, at which time the bids will be opened in the presence of an OHSU representative, there will not be a public bid opening.

Construction Manager and General Contractor
Hoffman Construction Company of Oregon
1300 SW 6th Ave PO Box 1300
Portland Oregon 97207
Oregon License #28417
Bid Phone: 503-221-8811
Fax Number: 503-221-8934

We are an equal opportunity employer and request sub-bids from disadvantaged, minority, women, disabled veterans or emerging small business enterprises.

Request For Proposal • 95-04 Survey of Business Design, Implementation, and Analysis

The Portland Development Commission is soliciting proposals for the design, implementation, and analysis of its bi-annual Business Survey.

PDC seeks a consultant who can design a survey instrument for use over time, and can be modified to include supplemental questions. The consultant is expected to design the survey instrument, mail survey forms printed by PDC using mailing labels supplied by PDC, follow up with survey recipients if necessary, and analyze survey results.

The scope of work and additional conditions are described in greater detail in supporting documents available from Christopher Juniper, Acting Manager of Business Development, (503) 823-3328.

Portland Development Commission
1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97204

**Proposals must be received by PDC
no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 2, 1994**

The Portland Development Commission encourages participation of Minority, Women and Emerging Small Business Enterprises contractors in its projects.

The successful contractor must be certified by the City of Portland as an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and be licensed to do business in the City of Portland.

AFRICA INSIGHT

Nigeria is in the news again and in a mess too.

And almost every time, I am bombarded by hordes of newsmen, inquisitive Africa-Americans who are concerned about their ancestral motherland and others who just want to be informed. I am often accused of keeping too mute and that having worked for the nation's government and the private media, I should talk and tell the world, without fear, the insight of what is going on in my native land. Yes, I will talk if only, I am assured that the military juntas will be purged. And I am safe even within this society.

In the light of the temper and pre-occupation of Nigeria right now - the constitutional conference - it is incumbent on me to take you back on how constitutional writing slipped into our own political lexicon and the damage it has wrought ever since. It is worth reminding you that traditional Africa or precisely Nigeria societies, usually did not have a written constitution rather, what fulfilled the functions of the constitution was the culture of the people - their habits, their ethnic congregations and ways of doing things. The need of a constitution becomes pertinent when two or more cultures inhabit one place. This was so in many Africa states and of many third world nations, where extremely parallel cultures were merged into an awkward society. In Nigeria, the British used the word [amalgamation] for this cultural merge. The aims of the constitution, folks were told, was to promote peace.

In the late 1950s, Nigerians sent their nationalists to the London constitutional conference with the mandate to negotiate with the imperial government and bring back independence. In that conference, the British agreed to give Nigerians time to rule themselves. Many sang and danced 'Ajasco' music. Nigerians rollicked in jubilation and celebrations and embraced the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nobody questioned the agenda of the constitutional conference. What did it matter if it was at all cost? A federal constitution was foisted upon us. An unbalanced and foreign policy handcuffed to our hands. We woke up after the fanfares and found that we were given a mandate we did not ask for - federalism - all Nigerians wanted was freedom from British rule. I must say that our political leaders thought the agreement reached in London would create room for adjustment. They realized too late that the constitution handed down by the United Kingdom was like a straight jacket. It gives little room for maneuvering. Naturally, the first independence constitution was patterned after the colonial constitution - the Richard the MacPherson Constitution. They were in essence, a master servant agreement. The independence constitution was different only because the master was represented by the

master's agent - a trusted servant.

With this fraudulent beginning seemingly etched into the national psyche, Nigeria, unfortunately has not been able to evolve and produce a constitution free from abuse. Every military regime has tinkered with it and has prevented meaningful, popular participation and ever since the independence of Nigeria in 1960, all crises in the country have sooner all later led to widespread demand for a constitutional review.

This is the reason for the current military call for a constitutional conference in that political enclave. The resultant effect of all these incongruous constitutional taverns is that it has gotten previous and succeeding military regimes drunk in power and made sovereign people of Nigeria unable to design for themselves their dream society.

(Promise King was born in Nigeria. He has worked for local and foreign media and is a staff writer for the Portland Observer.)



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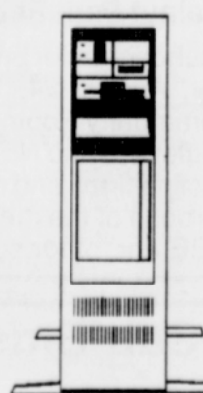
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