

Opinion: Lead Safe Tahoe a success

By Janie Green

In 2009, South Lake Tahoe was awarded its first lead hazard control grant for \$1.5 million that was funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Lead Safe Tahoe program was established so the city could assist members of our community in reducing their exposure to hazards from lead-based paint. In 2011, the city was awarded a second lead hazard control grant in the amount of \$2 million.

The Lead Safe Tahoe program assisted qualified residents and had 581 homes tested for lead-based paint hazards and provided control work for 214 of these homes that tested positive for high levels of lead. This control work included stabilizing and repainting exterior and interior surfaces of these properties and replacement of trim, baseboard, doors and windows. The city also provided educational information to the residents and offered free testing of the children to check for elevated lead levels in their blood.

At the time the grant was started the community did not have any contractors or workers trained and certified to the standards required by HUD in order to perform the lead mitigation work. Through these grants, 244 members of our community were trained and certified for lead safe work practices including Supervisor Training, RRP (Renovation, Repair and Painting) and Abatement.

Although these lead hazard control grants have had a huge impact on the safety of our community members, lead hazards still exist in many of the buildings and homes. If your home or other residential property was built before 1978, there is a chance it may contain lead based paint hazards. With the

final grant closing, the city wanted to do something to continue to positively impact our community and has produced a 10 minute lead safe work practices video that will be available in English and Spanish on the city website. This video provides some basic information about lead based paint hazards and some instructional information for property owners on lead safe work practices. If you are a home owner doing small repairs or renovations around your home, this video could be beneficial for you to view.

The Lead Safe Tahoe program has also put together bags with some materials to assist you if you are doing small repairs. The Lead Safe Bags contain a copy of the lead safe work practices video on DVD, googles, HEPA-masks, disposable suit, shoe covers, disposable gloves, cleaning wipes, duct tape, a spray bottle, and lead based paint informational pamphlets. These bags are available for free starting Jan. 12, while supplies last, at the Development Services Building permit counter located at 1052 Tata Lane.

Janie Green is the Lead Safe Tahoe project manager.

Finally we would like to remind you that lead paint exposure can occur during any home renovations. We have provided you with some basic guidance and tools, in order to prevent exposing yourself or your family to these lead hazards. We recommend before starting any work, you have your home assessed by a professional Lead Inspector and Risk Assessor. If lead based paint hazards are identified use lead safe work practices or hire a licensed lead-certified contractor to do the work for you.