

# Grant to pay for lead paint removal in SLT homes



By Kathryn Reed

With more than 85 percent of the houses in South Lake Tahoe having been built before 1980, it's likely a substantial amount of lead is still on the walls of houses in the area.

The federal government banned lead paint in 1978, but it didn't mean having to eradicate it from places where it had been used.

Now, decades later, the feds are helping to do just that.

South Lake Tahoe is one of 12 cities in the country to share \$12 million to buy the equipment to test homes for lead, train contractors to rid a home of the dangerous element and pay for a house to be repainted. South Tahoe is receiving \$1.5 million. The money comes from the Office of Healthy Homes.

The goal is to rehab at least 100 houses of lead paint and test another 100 within the city limits.

All of the money except for the \$25,000 that will be used to buy the equipment to test the paint is expected to stay in the community. Buying the equipment is less expensive than having to pay a certified inspector about \$500 per test. The machine also allows for instantaneous results instead of waiting days or weeks.

"The money allows us to train contractors how to get rid of

lead based paint. (Lake Tahoe Community College) is putting together the program for training," explained Nancy Kerry, manager of the city's Redevelopment and Housing Department.

A meeting will be conducted Jan. 28 at 5pm at Lake Tahoe Airport for all contractors who are interested in being part of the program.

"We want them to help design the program," Kerry said of the contractors.

She would like the training to begin in March, with work on some homes starting in May. The grant lasts three years, with the money arriving this month.

For a homeowner to be part of the project, they must meet low-income requirements, which more than half of the households in South Lake Tahoe can do. And it's the occupant who has to meet the guidelines, not the owner.

Households with children will also go to the front of the list. The grant provides money for Barton Memorial Hospital to administer blood tests to children living in houses with lead paint.

If lead is found, grant money can be spent on relocating the home occupants while the lead is removed and the house is repainted. Relocation is necessary because lead can't just be sanded off the walls. Everything will have to be covered up so it doesn't get into other areas.

"We will use tax roles to look for older homes, owner occupied. We'll send them letters telling them we'd like to test their home if they meet income requirements," Kerry said.

For more information, call Nancy Kerry at (530) 542.6043 or click on meeting.