“CAN WE TALK”

By Terry Brunette

My picture, is replaced this time with a new poster that will be distributed throughout El Paso County. If you had the opportunity to read my last column in the Gazette, you’ll remember I made a commitment to come up with a better way to educate our elderly population about repair and remodeling scams and hiring out work to be done on their homes in general. Regional Building Department is collaborating with HBA Cares, Silver Key, and the Better Business Bureau. Additionally, we will have support from the Council of Neighborhood Organizations. There are over a hundred neighborhood organizations that are members of CONO. In addition to having information on the CONO web page we will be working on getting all of the neighborhoods involved in the distribution of the handouts Innovations in Aging Collaborative and the Senior Resource Council also have shown interest in adding the information to their websites. Currently there are over 77 million seniors in the United States and 10,000 baby boomers turning 65 years old every day. It’s predicted that within the next 5 years the retirees will control 70% of the disposable income in the Country, making this group prime targets for any scam that people can dream up. Through the 8 years I have been the ‘complaint guy’ at RBD it has become evident that the most vulnerable citizens in our community to scammers are the elderly and first time home owners.

The goal is to encourage anyone, if they are approached by a contractor or solicitor, to call one or all of the agencies listed. If their question can’t be answered by one member of the group the caller will be directed to a different agency that may be able to help. If we can get all of our citizens to call before they get scammed the result is not only saving the victim money and aggravation, but a cost savings to the community as a whole.
There are many organizations/agencies in our community designed to assist our growing elderly population. Working independently they all have, while doing great works, limitations on what they can do. My hope is that by combining forces we can jointly have a far greater impact in the community.

This effort will continue to evolve as we move forward and I am excited to be a part of it. More info to follow as this effort progresses.

All of my previous columns are available on our website www.pprbd.org
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