

**April 27, 2002**

**Commissioner Dykstra Launches Innovative Outreach Program to License Contractors in Conjunction with the Korean-American Construction Association of New York**

Hundreds of prospective home improvement contractors lined up today to apply for a Consumer Affairs Contractors license as the Korean-American Construction Association teamed with the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner for an innovative on-site licensing session. The on-site was held today from 1 PM to 5 PM at the Hyo Shin Bible Church at 42-15 166th Street in Flushing. In order to help hopeful applicants navigate the licensing process, representatives of the Korean-American Construction Association translated documents and tests into Korean. DCA licensing personnel took applications, fingerprints and administered licensing exams.

"Making sure that businesses are properly licensed is good for consumers and good for businesses," stated Commissioner Dykstra. "DCA licenses some 65 categories of business and enforces the laws and regulations pertaining to those businesses. It is better to educate businesses first and then hold them accountable later. This collaboration between Consumer Affairs and the Korean American Construction Association is a positive example of government working with private industry groups to ensure compliance with the law."

"It has been more than a pleasure to work with the Department of Consumer Affairs to achieve and overcome the language barrier that has been an obstacle for the Korean construction community since the 1970's. Through team work and professionalism, the door of opportunity has been opened for all to enter," said Chong Ku Ho, President of the Korean-American Construction Association of New York.

"Each year DCA receives more complaints against home improvement contractors than any other category and we have made it a priority to inform consumers of their rights and businesses of their responsibilities," said the Commissioner. "As shown today, the Department will work with trade associations and community based organizations to reach groups of unlicensed but well intentioned business. We commend the Korean-American Construction Association for its efforts."

Home improvement contractors and home improvement contractor salespeople are required by the Rules of the City of New York to be licensed by the Department of Consumer Affairs. A person or business must have a Home Improvement Contractor license if engaged in the construction, repair, remodeling or addition to any land or building used as a residence. This includes, but is not limited to, the construction, replacement or improvement of driveways, swimming pools, terraces, patios, landscaping, fences, porches, garages, basements and other modifications made to structures or upon land which is adjacent to a home or apartment building.

In order to obtain a license, a Contractor or Salesperson must fill out a Consumer Affairs license application, pass a licensing exam administered by the Department, undergo background and



fingerprint checks and either post a bond or pay \$200 into a trust fund. DCA uses the trust fund to provide restitution to consumers exploited by delinquent contractors. Last year, DCA reimbursed consumers for their losses. The initial cost of the license is \$100 and must be renewed every two years for an additional \$100.

For more information on obtaining a Home Improvement Contractor or Salesperson license contact the Department of Consumer Affairs at:

NYC Department of Consumer Affairs  
Licensing Department  
42 Broadway, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10004