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## **Panel of Construction Forensic Experts to Share Industry Secrets at Upcoming Symposium**

*Stan Luhr and other experts are facing new challenges as homeowners turn to litigation when the builder skips town and their home no longer keeps them warm and dry.*

San Diego, CA (Vocus/PRWEB)April 02, 2011 -- Construction defect consultant Stan Luhr has been selected to moderate a panel of forensic experts at the West Coast Casualty Construction Conference May 12-13 in Anaheim Calif. Luhr, a 28-year forensic consultant and President of Pacific Property Consultants, will focus the panel discussion to include claims, investigations and solutions to problems encountered by the more than 20,000 estimated forensic consultants who analyze leaky windows and study defective products across the country.

Forensic construction experts are facing increased demands in light of the recession, as homeowners already struggling discover problems with their homes. On the other side, unscrupulous attorneys canvas door to door looking for clients. Luhr said, "In times like these even the attorneys will stoop to new levels to attract business, and homeowners fall victim when full disclosure is not made."

Luhr testified before the California State Judiciary Committee on March 15, bringing the issue to light as Assembly Bill AB 20 was being debated. It was defeated along party lines with democrat members uncomfortably sitting on the opposite side of consumer's rights and siding with the plaintiffs' bar, who denounced the bill as a violation of attorney-client rights.

Forensic consultants are caught in the middle of this debate, and are usually the first responders to claims of water intrusion and poor plumbing. Many consultants are architects, engineers, contractors and certified inspectors with focused areas of specialty necessary to identify and document building failures, code violations and life-safety issues in buildings. The consultant's work is paramount for each

side of the litigation action, where plaintiffs and defense experts often see the same thing but might have conflicting opinions on how to resolve the problems.

Certain topics sure to be discussed involve the evolution of Right to Repair laws such as California's Civil Code 895, which pre-empts lawsuits and allows a builder to assess and repair problems prior to going to court. California and several other states have recently enacted similar laws to help unclog the court systems and give builders an opportunity to correct construction defects. California's law creates a very specific performance based standard for building leakage and building performance and requires that homeowners properly maintain their homes or be subject to affirmative defenses at trial.

"The work of the forensic expert is like collecting evidence in a crime scene, where the devil is in the details," said Stan Luhr. "We still have to use analytical tools and good investigation techniques to get at the truth." Luhr and his team utilize specialized equipment such as infra-red cameras that can detect temperature differences caused by drops of water inside wall cavities along with traditional equipment such as ruggedized laptops, cameras and a note pad.

The panel discussion is a rare opportunity for experts at this event, which traditionally is dominated by attorneys, judges and mediators all vying to share their thoughts in this multi-billion dollar legal industry. The West Coast event is the largest such event in the U.S., with nearly 2,000 invited guests attending each year.

Luhr's firm was also selected to build a large exhibit featuring many construction components in various states of failure in this year's Technology Fair. Last year, the company presented an exhibit with over 300 construction defects and challenged attendees to identify as many as they could. Luhr won't say what new items are in store for this year's exhibit, but he hinted that there will be "something involving water testing" with this year's presentation.

In addition to the construction defect related courses, this year the event will host a Science & Technology Fair to showcase innovative construction products that promise to improve quality, reduce risk and provide better comfort for homeowners. Manufacturers such as DuPont, Flir Imaging, Monier Roof Tile and others have already committed to present educational exhibits to the group.

## About Pacific Property Consultants



Pacific Property Consultants has inspected more than 15,000 properties for lending institutions, developers, subcontractors, designers, product manufacturers, building owners, law firms, and insurance companies. Since 1984, the firm has been retained to provide expert witness testimony in thousands of cases. Pacific Property Consultants has provided construction consulting, inspection, testing, and cost estimating services nationwide.

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