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For more information, contact Andy Gallagher
(304) 415-4187 or andy@wvhi.org

Smith and Jones to face criminal charges

CHARLESTON – A Kanawha County company that transports and installs manufactured homes without having the proper state license will face criminal charges in Boone County after a state regulatory board issued its sixth order Thursday for the company to stop operating.

The West Virginia Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Board also fined the company and two others \$2,700 for various infractions, while issuing reprimands to four more. The six-member State Board regulates the manufactured housing business in West Virginia.

The panel also issued license expansions to three West Virginia retail dealers.

The State Board upheld a cease and desist order issued against Smith and Jones Mobile Home Movers Inc., owned by Gary Smith of Belle, for operating without a license. It fined the company \$1,000. Mitch Woodrum, who heads the manufactured housing section of the state Division of Labor, said as a result of the citation the company will face its third offense for criminal charges, which were filed in Boone County. The state is awaiting a trial date. Convictions have been rendered against the business in Nicholas and Fayette counties.

Woodrum said two additional cease and desist orders are pending, which will bring to eight the number of orders issued by the State Board for the company to halt operations.

State Board member Jack Albert bemoaned the fact the multiple disciplinary actions have been taken against Smith and Jones, but the company remains in operation and unlicensed.

The State Board fined a central West Virginia retailer \$1,000 for multiple installation infractions, which have been remedied. It fined Southern Ohio Construction, LLC, \$750 for doing setup work that did not take into consideration potential frostline problems. The reprimands went to a defunct Virginia company and three West Virginia businesses.

The State Board fined 29 companies a total of \$2,175 for their failure to file reports on their quarterly business activity. Eight of the companies were repeat offenders.

Retail licenses were issued to: Trinity Homes LLC of Smithburg for a location at 212 Emily Dr., Clarksburg, which is the company's second location; Prestige Housing Inc. of Jane Lew for its third location, this one at Buckhannon; three licenses were granted to Lester Mobile Home Sales Inc. of Ikes Fork for two locations in Bluefield, Va., and another at Tazewell, Va. In addition, Rocky Mount Mobile Home Movers Inc. of Rocky Mount, Va., and Paul Ellison Jr., doing business as JR's Construction, of Lyburn were issued licenses to work on manufactured housing in West Virginia.

The State Board has \$1.5 million in a fund the industry voluntarily set up to deal with claims against companies that have gone out of business.

The board scheduled two future meetings for June 27 and July 11.