



County of Santa Cruz

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PRESS RELEASE

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BOARD APPLAUDS RETURN OF WINTER SHELTER PROGRAM

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved the establishment of a temporary Emergency Winter Shelter to offer additional shelter to homeless persons during upcoming winter months.

The agreement is the result of months of negotiations between the County, local cities, the Association of Faith Communities, Homeless Services Center and the two hosts for the upcoming Emergency Winter Shelter: the Salvation Army and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7263. The Shelter program is scheduled to begin operations Dec. 1.

The Association of Faith Communities will operate the shelters, located on Laurel Street in Santa Cruz and 7th Avenue in Live Oak, respectively. A Live Oak community meeting was recently held to discuss shelter operations, with VFW and Association of Faith Communities officials in attendance to answer questions, as well as Supervisor John Leopold, Sheriff Jim Hart and Homeless Services Coordinator Rayne Marr.

Emergency Winter Shelter users will undergo criminal background checks and other screening processes before entering the shelter. They will be bussed from an intake site at 1220 River St. to the shelter sites, where paid security will assure the safety of shelter users and surrounding neighborhoods. No contraband, including weapons, drugs or alcohol, will be allowed in shelters. Clients must visit the intake site first, with no walk-up services provided at either shelter site.

The most recent census of the homeless population showed nearly 2,000 homeless persons in Santa Cruz County. Though formerly operated at the Armory building in DeLaveaga Park, the VFW and Salvation Army have graciously volunteered to host it, with Salvation Army shelter operations beginning in January. Local churchgoers will provide nightly meals and companionship to shelter users.