

surfaced
I've lived in Humboldt County for over 20 years and most of those years it seems the Sudden Emergency of homelessness has ~~been~~ ^{surfaced} on ~~somebody's~~ ^{governmental} agenda--especially each winter when rain and cold mandate a place for the homeless to stay. There has often been panic and then a hastily construed solution. But, seldom has the ~~solution~~ ^{treatment} been more than a band-aid on a gaping wound. There were temporary shelters and cold weather shelters, the Rescue Mission, and countless other attempts to get people off the streets. Today, the solution in Eureka is largely to put the homeless people up in empty hotels and motels along the Broadway strip. While I concede that it's better to put people in a hotel than leave them out in the cold, there are several problems with our current solution to homelessness. *some where*

First: persons who are homeless are not only victims—of things like poor health and a lousy jobs market—they usually lack life skills and often have addictions. Therefore, putting them out of the rain, but in densely packed rooms in our ~~hotels and~~ motels hardly provides a long-term solution. They seldom get job training or drug and alcohol counseling, and therefore, I don't think it is far fetched to say they are simply being warehoused, *and their children will soon be homeless as well / duplicating the pattern with smelly change*

Second: the Broadway strip is ~~increasingly~~ becoming an ugly assembly of rundown hotels. This is the first visual impression that people have of Eureka driving in from the south: and it's not a favorable first impression.

It seems to me and many ~~people~~ ^{whom} that I talk to that the number of people begging, holding signs, *camping out in vehicles* asking for money, pushing shopping carts and dealing in drugs has greatly increased the past few years. *Barmanca*

What's a city to do? According to journalist Scott Carrier, who wrote a recent article "Room for Improvement" in Mother Jones Magazine, there are at any given time in our country about 580,000 persons who are unfortunate enough to be homeless. Fortunately, about 85% of them are temporarily homeless. The big problem is the 15% who are chronically homeless—about 84,000 people nationwide.

In 2005 the state of Utah estimated that there were about 2,000 chronically homeless persons in their state, most of them living in and around Salt Lake City. Authorities studied ^{the} cost of each homeless person: finding that the average cost per person was about 20,000 ~~per person~~ per year. They began a pilot program of providing free housing for the homeless, and, in sum, it worked. Soon, they implemented a statewide program called Housing First. *It's helped homeless, it saved money.* According to one authority in the field, there are now less than 270 homeless persons in Salt Lake City. If true, that means that Utah has essentially solved its homeless problem. *doing the same on a broader scale*

Finding answers to homelessness will never be easy, but it seems there certainly is "Room for Improvement" when it comes to the homeless programs in Humboldt County. Whatever you think, I urge every conscientious citizen to take interest in finding a humane and lasting solution to homelessness. *Because* Without the will of the people to solve this problem, it can only get worse.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment