

Shelter for homeless unoccupied as Essex holds out for food services

By DIANE CURCIO

The operators of a temporary shelter set up inside an old medical center in Newark said it has been ready more than a week, but Essex County officials said yesterday they are hesitant to send homeless people there due to a lack of on-site eating facilities.

We're operating and fully staffed. We passed all the fire and building inspections. We're waiting for Essex to send us people," said Nancy Monte, executive director of Catholic Community Service, which was contracted by the state to operate the 103-bed shelter.

The facility is located on the 10th floor of the old Martland Medical Center on Bergen Street, across from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ).

I just feel it's a waste not to have the facility used," said Monte.

While there are some 600 homeless families from

Essex being boarded in North Jersey motels at exorbitant costs, Alan Zalkind, director of the county Department of Citizen Services, said he has not referred any of the homeless to the shelter.

Zalkind said he is in "ongoing discussion" with Monte and her staff about services for the homeless families, most of which consist of a mother and two or three children.

The county official said Monte had satisfied his concerns about day care by promising assistance to the young mothers, who would need such services while they search for apartments or jobs.

But the county official said without access to the UMDNJ cafeterias in the building or across the street, mothers would be forced to walk several blocks to get all meals for their families.

Even though welfare families are not considered a desirable environment for the families, Zalkind said they offered coffee shops where the families could eat.

Monte countered there are "plenty of places to eat" in the area. She said her staff has noted there is a fast food restaurant, a diner, several delicatessens and a take-out restaurant within a few blocks.

The shelter director maintained her staff can provide counseling and case management, as well as offering remedial help and rehabilitative services to the shelter occupants through other programs administered by Catholic Community Services.

County Executive Nicholas Amato conceded that "when you weigh the positives and the negatives, this is better than staying at a motel." He also noted that health care is available to the families in the building.

Yesterday Amato said he has instructed Zalkind to begin processing families for placement at the Martland Center. But the county executive said he will continue to appeal to the state to open UMDNJ's cafeterias to the families.

"We don't want the food for free. Our clients will purchase it," said Amato, adding that the shelter occupants could be put on a special schedule so they do not interfere with the UMDNJ staff meal schedules.

"Just so the kids get some nourishing, wholesome, cooked food," said Amato.

The county executive said he expects the first families assigned to the shelter to arrive there on Monday.

It costs Essex County an average of \$70 a day to house a family of three in a motel. The Martland center will cost the county about \$40 daily.

Monte said under her contract with the state, her staff will be paid regardless of whether the facility is filled.

The Catholic Community Services contract for the operation is \$520,399, with \$416,145 being spent on staff salaries. The staff includes a director, case manager, home finder, eight counselors, a housekeeper, three fire marshals and four security guards.

Essex taps 'pool' for loan to revamp hospital

By DIANE CURCIO

For the first time, Essex County used the pooled government loan program, administered by the autonomous Essex County Improvement Authority (ECIA), to borrow \$5.3 million yesterday for renovations to the county psychiatric hospital.

The pooled government loan program was established in 1986 by the ECIA. It provides money for capital improvements with lower interest rates than traditional borrowing methods. The pool program offers a savings because rather than issuing securities individually, loan participants collectively issue one security backed by a common credit source. The interest rate

available through the pool is usually .5 to 2 percent lower than other markets.

Essex County Executive Nicholas Amato, Freeholder President Thomas P. Giblin, three ECIA commissioners, Leslie Lustbader, Msgr. John J. Petillo and J. Patrick Roche and ECIA acting executive director Thomas Banker, took part in the brief ceremony marking the occasion yesterday at the hospital center in Cedar Grove.

Amato said the loan will be used primarily for repairs to the five buildings along the hill on the 356-acre site. The repairs include roof replacements, masonry work, painting and plastering, electrical improvements and upgrading of the plumbing, heating and ventila-

tion systems.

The complex is comprised of 41 buildings, constructed near the turn of the century. But only nine structures are used to house patients.

A year ago the county administration assessed the buildings when it was negotiating with the state Department of Human Services in the hopes of securing funding for the hospital.

The county concluded an entire renovation program would cost \$16 million, with the first phase equaling \$5.3 million.

Amato contended when the repair program was submitted to the state, Human Services Commissioner Drew Altman "responded that there was no

funding available to carry out his commitment to Essex County."

When the state failed to provide funding, Amato asked for authorization from the freeholders to float bonds for at least the first phase of the work. In March the freeholder board approved the measure.

Contractors have already begun the work, using money from bond anticipation notes it had previously issued, according to Joseph Galluzzi, the acting director of the county finance department.

Since the notes were issued, however, the county hospital has been cited by federal and state examiners for its dilapidated conditions and insufficient staff. The poor ratings cost the hospital its eligibility for Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements, the federal and state programs paying health care costs for the elderly and the poor, respectively.

Amato contends the continuing repairs show his commitment to keep the hospital open and regain its eligibility for federal health reimbursements for treating the aged and disabled.

Jail director will resign in Union

By ROBERT E. MISSECK

Union County Jail Director Vincent O'Donoghue said yesterday he is resigning from the \$42,500 post effective Sept. 9.

In a letter to acting County Manager Ann Baran, the 56-year-old retired State Police officer cited "personal and professional reasons" for leaving the job he has held for 20 months.

"I found the job to be challenging and I felt I achieved a measure of success in my efforts to upgrade the professionalism and operations of the facility," O'Donoghue said.

He said he plans to seek employment in the private sector.

Baran said she will meet with O'Donoghue and Public Safety Director William Tisdall to discuss "finding someone appropriate from within the ranks to temporarily run the jail until a nationwide search can be conducted for a permanent replacement."

Baran said O'Donoghue's resignation "will be a loss to the county." She added she had found him to be a "very efficient" administrator.

"I'm certainly sorry to see him go," Tisdall said. "He did a very good job while he was here, and it will be very difficult to replace him."

Tisdall said O'Donoghue's decision "was his own. There was no pressure put on him to go, and he is certainly welcome to stay."

Freeholder Chairman Michael J. Lapolla said he was surprised by O'Donoghue's decision and maintained the jail director "always had a decent working relationship with the freeholders."

Lapolla created a special committee this year to review complaints of corrections officers that O'Donoghue and several superior officers liked to "play favorites" and "pick on" members of the jail staff who fell into their disfavor.

Jail administrators said the corrections officers were upset because O'Donoghue had tightened up a lenient supervisory structure and was making corrections officers more accountable for their work and the manner in which they treated superior officers and each other.

"I think the committee has achieved some success," Lapolla said. "And I think we were beginning to address some of the problems and concerns that were being raised."

Lapolla said the first job of incoming County Manager Joseph A. Martin, who starts Sept. 1, will be to find a permanent jail director. "This will not be easy in light of the serious overcrowding at the old jail and the opening of the new jail next year," the freeholder chairman said.

O'Donoghue previously was a State Police major, retiring after 27 years of service. A Toms River resident, he took over the jail director's post Jan. 1, 1987.

He succeeded Joseph Carroll, who was removed by the freeholders in February 1986 after the union representing correction officers claimed Carroll was incompetent and insensitive to subordinates. Carroll was reinstated by the board two months later following a public hearing. He resigned in December, 1986.

Two women cited on stolen car charge

By KEVIN DILWORTH

The wife of a reputed drug kingpin and another woman were arrested in West Orange on charges of driving a stolen luxury car, police reported yesterday.

Police Chief Edward M. Palardy said Juanita Pray, 40, of Mountain Way, and Simone Davis, 27, who resides in the Pray house, were arrested about 8:45 p.m. Monday outside the Golden China Restaurant in the Essex Green Shopping Plaza.

Pray is the wife of Wayne (Akbar) Pray, the alleged boss of a 400-member New Jersey narcotics network known as "The Family."

On Aug. 7, Pray's 18-year-old son, Akbar Majid Pray, along with a 17-year-old Hackensack boy, were arrested in West Orange on charges of being passengers in a stolen vehicle.

Pray and Davis, who had an infant daughter with her, were taken into custody shortly after police arrived at the shopping

plaza to investigate an unrelated altercation in the parking lot, Palardy explained.

Police Sgt. Michael Cassidy and Officers Gerald Drappi and Raymond Rosania were questioning the people involved with the dispute when they recognized a four-door 1984 BMW as a car reported stolen in Newark, he said.

According to Palardy, Pray and Davis were both charged with receiving stolen property. They were processed in police headquarters and released pending a municipal court arraignment on Tuesday. The stolen car was impounded by the police.

On Tuesday, Pray's son also is scheduled to be arraigned on charges of receiving stolen property and driving a stolen car.

On June 24 Pray's husband was ordered held in jail in Newark without bail following his arrest in Boca Raton, Fla., on drug conspiracy charges. The arrest ended a three-week manhunt by federal narcotics agents.

Orange man captured with 'armed robbery' car

By KEVIN DILWORTH

A 19-year-old Orange man has been arrested on charges of driving a \$68,000 Mercedes-Benz stolen in a Livingston armed robbery two months ago.

Police Director Charles Cobbetti identified the suspect as Mick MacKoon.

"A confidential informant tipped police" on how MacKoon, who until recently lived on Reynolds Terrace, was driving a car stolen June 30 at a Livingston supermarket, Cobbetti said.

Orange Detective Todd Bertolini, along with Livingston Lt. Lee Schroeder and Detective Brian Rabbitt, went to MacKoon's former home Monday, he added.

Inside, Cobbetti said, they "found evidence of the armed robbery," including the Mercedes-Benz registration and a remote control garage door opener belonging to the owner of the vehicle.

Authorities later learned the suspect was at the home of friends on Park Avenue and found the car with MacKoon inside, the director said.

MacKoon, who offered no resistance when arrested, was charged with possession of stolen property, Cobbetti said.

The original license plates on the stolen Mercedes-Benz were not found. Cobbetti said the plates MacKoon had on the vehicle belonged to a 1986 Volvo stolen in another Livingston armed robbery. The Volvo was reported stolen last Sept. 1.

MacKoon was arraigned in Orange Municipal Court yesterday and was held on \$25,000 bail, pending grand jury action.

The police director noted how two additional charges, including one for armed robbery, have been filed against MacKoon in Livingston.

Fixup funds proposed

By DAVID P. WILLIS

The Morris County freeholders yesterday proposed spending \$600,000 to patch up Fosterfields, which they described as a living farm/museum with some frayed edges.

If the money is approved at the board's Aug. 30 meeting, the Morris County Parks Commission can finish renovations begun 10 years ago when the county acquired the facility in Morris Township.

The funds would be used to restore an old garage, repair stone walls and build a maintenance shop at the farm, which dates back to the early 19th century, said Denise Moore, the commission's director of physical resources.

She added the farm's 1854 mansion, called The Willows, which was once home of the farm's late owner, Caroline Foster, and Paul Revere's grandson, Joseph Warren Revere, should be open to the public next year.

Fosterfields is typical of area farms of the 19th century. County park employees and volunteers still use old steel beam plows pulled by a pair of

horses and an old-fashioned row seeder to plant crops.

The public can try a hand at helping farmers plant, tend and harvest crops at the Route 24 site, a little more than a mile west of Morristown.

"Fosterfields is not just an outdoor museum that you visit for entertainment; it is also an alternative educational institution, like the county college," said Andrew Drysdale, Fosterfields' education curator.

Each day the place attracts up to 100 schoolchildren, who learn about the basic facts of agriculture and see where food comes from.

Drysdale called the planned renovations "icing on a good cake."

The proposed maintenance shop will store some of Fosterfields' old farm machines after volunteers and staff restore them, said Helen Hesselgraze, the commission's education director. The equipment now is kept outside.

"The stuff is over 100 years old... it is critical to get it under cover," Hesselgraze said. Also, several stone walls need a quick fix, she said.

W. Orange to upgrade parking lot

A \$115,000 bond ordinance to finance improvements on a municipal parking lot was adopted last night by the West Orange Council.

The facility, known as the Tory Corner Parking Lot, is located between Main and Washington streets. Of the \$115,000 to be spent, \$71,700 will come in grants from the state Department of Transportation. The work will include resurfacing, landscaping and the installation of curbing and a sidewalk.

To facilitate the lot, left turns

from Main Street south onto Franklin Avenue will be prohibited. Also, parking or standing approximately 385 feet from the intersection of Eagle Rock Avenue and Lauren Avenue will be banned.

In other action, the council agreed to purchase a 24-passenger bus from the Woldington Body Co. of Mt. Holly for \$27,995. Also, a Ford tractor will be purchased from the Caldwell Tractor and Equipment Co. of Fairfield for \$13,969.

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