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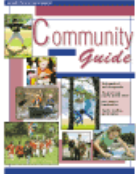
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Front Page

Police, pastor reach out to men in need of help

**BY DAVE BENJAMIN
Staff Writer**

JACKSON - Although an organized one-day effort on Jan. 25 failed to locate any homeless residents in Jackson, persistence paid off last week for those who care about people in need.

Christopher Soleberry, pastor of the Hope of Glory Worship Center, reported that two homeless individuals were found to be living in the community.

Jackson police continued to provide assistance is searching for people in need of help.

"When we originally did the survey [Jan. 25] there were absolutely no homeless people in town," Jackson police Sgt. Edward Bennett said. "We have since had two [move here]. Within two days after the first person arrived, a second individual migrated in. They were [both] taken care of."

"Sgt. Bennett located a homeless person in Jackson who meets the criteria, no housing, no heat, no electric, no income," Soleberry said, explaining that a man he identified as C.B., 47, was living on a condemned property on Cassville Road.

"Jackson Code Enforcement personnel found him there and he was ordered to leave," Soleberry said. "He refused and the police came."

The homeless man was taken to police headquarters by Bennett.

Soleberry said C.B. has no income and no place to stay, and was deemed homeless according to criteria used by the police department and by the homeless survey.

Soleberry said he was called by Bennett and told that C.B. needed assistance.

"I contacted the Department of Mental Health and Special Response who would have placed him into a hotel for 24 hours until he could be processed for state aid," the pastor said. "But C.B. wanted to go back to the [property] to pick up his belongings."

Soleberry said he reached out to the owner of Jackson's Maple Lake Camp Ground.

"The owner is also familiar with the Hope of Glory Worship Center through the homeless survey and because our church members bring food to some of the people in the camp ground," the pastor said. "The owner allowed C.B. to stay in a trailer there until we could have him processed by Special Response."

Soleberry said he is trying to get emergency financial aid, food stamps and a Medicaid card for C.B.

The second homeless individual arrived at police headquarters on his own.

Bennett said a person he identified as M.M., no age available, took a cab ride from a local hospital thinking he could stay with a friend. That turned

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out not to be the case and M.M. ended up spending the night on the side of the road. He eventually found the police station.

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Bennett called Soleberry again and said, "Chris you're not going to believe this. A man walked into the police station and I was standing there. He said to me, 'I am wet, I am hungry, I have not eaten in two days, I give up.' "

Soleberry said Bennett provided food and medical help to M.M.

"This man had been sleeping in an abandoned shed on Route 571 and in the streets," the pastor said. "He was once a man that had a family, but lost them. His mother, father and brother all died. He became an alcoholic. No one would help this man, until now."

Soleberry said Bennett told M.M. about the Hope of Glory Worship Center and about how he could receive help. The individual agreed to be helped.

Soleberry said police know the Hope of Glory Worship Center can offer assistance in this type of situation.

"I believe the homeless survey has started something, even though we did not see these people when the survey was done," he said. "Perhaps now they feel secure that someone was looking for them, which means that someone cares.

"The police department has been great with this effort, the owner of Maple Lake willingly offered his facilities to help, and the Hope of Glory Worship Center has committed to caring and restoring these people in mind, body and spirit," Soleberry said. "This is exciting. Lives are being touched and changed in our community This is what a community is for."

Bennett, whose responsibilities include keeping a count of homeless people in town, said the two men who were found last week were down on their luck. He said the police department remains ready and willing to help individuals who may be in need of assistance.