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## Funds approved for migrant housing

While snow fell Tuesday night and some migrant farmworkers braved a bitter night in cars or migrant housing, officials approved money to bring them help.

Hank March, director of Washington County Community Development Block Grant program, said \$30,000 to help implement a program to move migrants into vacant units at Elm Park development in Forest Grove was approved unanimously Tuesday by the Washington County Board of Commissioners and the policy advisory board.

And March said he's interested in working toward a permanent solution to what he sees as a continuing and growing social problem each winter.

The money approved Tuesday will help fund a \$73,400 budget put together by Washington County Community Action. The social agency has been designated to coordinate the project to open the vacant housing at Elm Park to get the migrants out of the cold.

Some are still in Washington County and other agricultural areas because they have no money to return to Mexico. Some are here because they think opportunities are better for employment.

The program began earlier this month when statewide attention was drawn to the Little Beaver Camp at North Plains. The owner, Ron Tankersley, was fined by the Oregon Safety and Health division for

allowing conditions they deemed unsanitary and unsafe.

Tankersley was fined \$30,650 for not having partitions between toilets, for cleanliness and no toilet paper available when inspectors arrived.

Tankersley claims OSHA had no jurisdiction because the people there were not his employees and that, in fact, he was not operating a migrant camp.

"They are only there because they had no other place to go and we couldn't leave them out in the cold," he said.

Two migrant families showed up at the Elm Park doorstep last week and were given shelter in the vacant apartments that ordinarily have been reserved for summer use.

The CBDG funds approved for the program Tuesday will pay for transportation, food and other care support services, March said.

"But it is a band-aid approach to an important problem."

March would like to see all social agencies involved in migrant care formulate an on-going plan to take care of those who stay each year.

"Right now we're responding to a crisis that won't go away. We're all strapped for resources and are facing tougher times with Ballot Measure 5, but we need to sit down and plan an on-going program."

March said the funds allocated to the migrant program were some that had been allocated to two projects that had closed. "Or-

dinarily, we would not have had the funds, either," he said.

"I think there are some resources that could be identified for a permanent program, some places where housing could be planned on a temporary basis and where cots, blankets and other supplies might be stored.

"Then we could move people out of the cold weather like this."

March said the block grant program usually concentrates on the "bricks and mortar" problems, but recognizes and includes community services as part of the all-around program.

"What we need, though, is to take a hard look at a permanent solution so that we're not all scrambling at the last minute next year."