

First migrants move into Elm Park units

By LUCILLE WARREN
Of the Argus

Two migrant families settled comfortably at Elm Park over the weekend, and a project to move more migrants into warm housing is virtually assured.

Jeralynn Ness, director of Washington County Community Action, Monday said she has several possible sources for the \$40,000 needed to balance the \$73,400 budget needed to open 34 empty units at the Forest Grove migrant housing complex.

"Two families just showed up on the Elm Park doorstep on Friday," Ness said. "They met all the qualifications, so we moved them in."

They are the first of an estimated 100 migrant farm workers who have been living in cars or in migrant housing, where conditions can become bitter when cold weather strikes.

One source pinpointed by Ness is funds available to the Washington County Community Development Block Grant program.

Hank March, CBDG director, planned a special teleconference

meeting Tuesday morning with the policy advisory board that designates the allocation of CBDG funds.

The telephone meeting was to deal exclusively with providing emergency assistance to the migrant farm workers through the program approved by the county commissioners last week.

If March gets approval from the policy board, he will ask the board of commissioners to allow the expenditure of \$30,000.

The CBDG always has been there to deal with the migrant situation when it is needed," March said. "We invested \$100,000 and leveraged more than a million to begin Elm Park." The second addition to Elm Park also was formed through CBDG funds, as well as other projects to help farm workers.

"This is not an unusual use for the block grant. In this case, we ordinarily would have been as strapped as anyone, but we recently closed out two projects. We can redirect this contingency money at this time for a very basic need of the community."

"I have every reason to believe

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First migrants move in

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the policy board and the commissioners will allow the grant to this program."

The portion of the budget related to case management and care support services can be funded by the CBDG money. About \$30,000 of the total can come from CBDG funds, March said.

March said he is concerned that there be a long-term program to handle the winter problems seen with migrant families staying after the harvest.

Ness said other money requests to the Federal Emergency Management Act and to United Way still are being considered.

There have been some private fund donations and several calls this week made promises of more money.

"It's been much smoother than in 1988," Ness said. "This time the community came to us. I made a few calls and everyone pitched right in like they were saying it is part of the community's concern to make sure these migrants are not cold or hungry."

Ness said staff workers met

Monday with officials from the Housing Development Corp., which operates Elm Park, to begin formulating a contract for the migrant program.

Load limits

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dispatch office.

"What good is a sign without enforcement?" he asked.

"We realize it was a tough situation, but we have no choice in this matter. It was impossible to give warnings."

Two technicians are working on the bridge problem to determine a solution, Pixley said. "This is a very important bridge that needs lots of work. Unfortunately there is no timetable when it will become fully operational."

Until that time, Coulter said the nursery trucks will take the long way around, by way of Tongue Lane to Highway 219, then north past the county courthouse to the nursery plant between Cornelius and Roy.