



[News Search](#) [Web Search](#) [Classified Search](#) [Advertising](#) [Home Delivery](#) [Reader Services](#) [Trai](#)
[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Business](#) [Opinion](#) [Entertainment](#) [Features](#) [Community](#)
[Professional](#) • [College](#) • [High School](#) • [Amateur](#) • [Chargers](#) • [Padres](#) • [Community](#) • [Horse Racing](#) • [Colu](#)
[Lake Elsinore](#) [Menifee / Sun City](#) [Murrieta](#) [Temecula](#) [Wildomar](#) [River:](#)

Last modified Wednesday, November 21, 2007 8:12 PM PST

[Email this story](#) [Print this story](#) [Comment On This Story](#)
[+ TEXT SIZE -](#) [Comment in our Blog](#)

Economic climate spawns more needy

By: NICOLE SACK - Staff Writer

Local groups indicate 2007 holiday season will stretch resources

Southwest County organizations that serve the needy are bracing for the holiday season, expecting a larger demand for their services due to an increasing number of residents losing their homes to foreclosure and others feeling the financial pinch of higher prices for fuel and groceries.

In Lake Elsinore, the numbers speak for themselves, said Ron Hewison, executive director of Helping Our People of Elsinore. The nonprofit organization helps provide food to low-income families and homeless people in the city.

"We are seeing huge increases in the number of people we are feeding," he said. "It's certainly the economic situation that is driving the numbers up."

Between July 1 and Oct. 31, 2006, HOPE volunteers handed out groceries for the equivalent of 24,984 meals. During the same four-month period this year, the number more than doubled to 60,788 meals.

ADVERTISING

CENTURY 21 Wright
The Leader in Residential Home Sales!

TEMECULA
 MURRIETA
 WILDOMAR
 MENIFEE
 SUN CITY
 FALLBROOK
 LAKE ELSINORE
 CANYON LAKE

To Learn More
Click Here or Call!
951-694-5300

Hot Topics Readers reflect on the latest trends

Lessons our children learn too early

The other night I attended a candle-light vigil for a 14-year-old boy who had been gunned down by an unknown assailant in his rough City Heights neighborhood. [41 comment\(s\)](#)

Visit our news blogs at blog.nctimes.com.

"In July, there were 11,000 meals given out; 14,000 in August. When we hit 15,000 meals in September, we were shocked by the numbers -- it was the most we had ever given out in a month. But then in October, the number climbed to 20,000 meals," he said. "You can see that it's ramping up."

He said the demand for the food his organization provides is increasing because of more people in need and larger families seeking food. Hewison was quick to point out that while HOPE reaches out to the homeless, approximately 102 people in Lake Elsinore, the group is primarily interested in helping the working poor.

Denny Mighell, founder of Temecula Valley People Helping People, said not only is the number of people who need assistance with food, clothing, furnishings and housing growing, but the number of people who are able to contribute to charities is shrinking.

"Across the board, this has been a bad year for everyone," Mighell said. "People are losing jobs, they are losing their homes to foreclosures, and then you add the recent fires into the mix."

Founded in 1992, the nonprofit People Helping People specializes in helping area children, families and seniors with special medical needs, as well as victims of tragedies. During the holiday season, the group focuses on food and toy drives for the less fortunate.

Mighell said he expects thousands of families will struggle to scrape by, let alone have the money for a holiday meal or gifts.

But even as the need for help appears to be escalating quickly, Mighell said he's concerned that the donations to such organizations as his will dwindle. Rising costs for everyday items likely means most residents have less disposable income, which he fears could translate to fewer folks being able to help out. And those who are prone to step up likely did so last month in response to the wildfires that raged across Southern California.

Although few residents in Riverside County lost their homes in the recent fires, a growing number here are losing them to foreclosure. As of late October, some 5,000 homes in the county were mired in the foreclosure process, statistics have shown.

Nonetheless, Mighell holds out hope that goodwill will persevere despite mounting obstacles.

"I have faith in my fellow man. I have faith in God. I have faith in the people of our communities," he said. "I have no other choice than to have faith that we will pull through. It's just going to take people thinking beyond themselves."

Mighell expects more middle-income people to find themselves in dire straits this year than ever before. He encourages people to ask for help rather than turn to more drastic measures such as stealing.

"We all need help at one time or another," he said. "When you're back on your feet, you can give it back."

Mighell said that while national organizations such as the American Red Cross help people

nationwide, the best way to benefit the local community is to give to the organizations that directly serve its residents. He said people and businesses can make a difference by adopting a family during the holidays or helping an individual by tackling their wish list that is on donation trees at malls and stores that are decorated with wish lists of local residents needing a helping hand.

For more information on People Helping People, go to www.tvphp.org. To donate to HOPE, call (951) 245-7510 and leave a message.

-- Contact staff writer Nicole Sack at (951) 676-4315, Ext. 2616, or nsack@californian.com.

- [Previous Story:](#)
- [Next Story: County may overhaul animal fees](#)



Comments On This Story

Note: Comments reflect the views of readers and not necessarily those of the North County Times or its staff.

You lost me... wrote on Nov 21, 2007 8:20 PM:

" on the first paragraph. How does one go from owning a home to being "needy"? What happened in between? Just because someone defaulted on a mortgage they couldn't afford in the first place doesn't mean they need to go to the soup kitchen for the holidays. Come on...I think you should redefine the meaning of "need". "

jvc wrote on Nov 21, 2007 9:28 PM:

" It is ok to have more needy in our country as long as and after all we are bringing democracy to Iraq! "

Zeus wrote on Nov 21, 2007 11:00 PM:

" Spend less and live within your means. Welfare kills. The homeless should get their act together and contribute to society. Let them seek help from family and church- not government. "

Pappy wrote on Nov 21, 2007 11:48 PM:

" That sounds awfully cold and harsh Zeus. It's not though and your heart-felt compassion is refreshing. "

Formerly Poor wrote on Nov 22, 2007 1:23 AM:

" I used to be poor. My dad died when I was 8 and my mom raised us kids off social security and public assistance (welfare). I never got to go to college and after a turn in the navy, I returned home to San Diego. I can tell you that there isn't enough help for poor families. Finally, I started a small business hauling human sewage from port-a-potties to fertilize the farm fields. Probably some of the fresh veggies you eat has been fertilized with the waste my company has hauled. I do pretty well now and its tempting to take the Republican anti-welfare stance. But I remember those bleak Christmas days. I remember being teased by other kids because my clothes were second hand and worn out. I am all for helping the needy and I vote for politicians who believe as I do. Shame on those who would begrudge a child a Christmas present. And shame on those Republicans who want to do away with social security. I didn't deserve to be poor and I feel everyone should get a helping hand whatever their situation. "

Resident wrote on Nov 22, 2007 6:46 AM:

" That is what happens to an area like Southwest County that offers no job diversity whatsoever! Working a mediocre retail job does not get you ahead here or if you have a job down in San Diego or Orange County, people are seeing less of their disposable incomes because of the high gas prices even if you have a 4 cylinder.

The area needs more high paying jobs yesterday... "

Janetteski wrote on Nov 22, 2007 10:14 AM:

" Response to Zeus & Pappy, I've seen and been on both sides and in some respects the 'needy consumers' are helping soak up the surplus in some areas. I've seen dumpsters full of age dated, perfectly good food with 'dumpster divers' locked out and it's all headed for the landfill dump. In these cases proper donation, collection and distribution by all the organizations and volunteers is truly a good thing. Thank you Californian for your comments section of the news. "

WhoWhat wrote on Nov 22, 2007 10:17 AM:

" The facts are non-existent Foreclosure does not equal starving. Most who received these interest only, no down payment ARM's moved in, stayed in a house rent free for a couple years and moved out with nothing lost. This story makes no sense, more like a preemptive request for more donations, but c'mon be honest. Also: unemployment is hovering around 5-1/2% with little upward signs, who are these mysterious people getting handouts? Maybe illegal immigrants that wont go back to Mexico for the holidays due to Mexico's hazardous corruption and our increased border control??? See article http://nctimes.com/articles/2007/11/22/news/top_stories/1_01_3811_21_07.txt "

ME THATS WHO.. wrote on Nov 22, 2007 11:02 AM:

" WHOWHAT!!!!...WE LOST OUR HOUSE, LOST JOBS DUE TO LAYOFFS, LOST 80K IN CASH, NEVER GOT WELFARE, WORKED WITHIN WEEKS OF LAYOFF, LOST EVERYTHING, BOTH NEW CARS, PAID OUR MORTGAGE EVERY MONTH, COULDN'T SELL IT FOR WHAT IT WAS WORTH...NOW WE NEED HELP. BUT 2 YRS AGO WE MADE 75K A YEAR.. NOW LESS THAN 28K WITH 4 KIDS...SOME PEOPLE ACTUALLY FALL ON HARD TIMES AND ARE AREN'T ILLEGAL, WE ARE NORMAL, WHITE CHRISTIAN CONSERVATIVE FAMILY...NOW WHAT??? THATS WHOS LOSING THEIR HOUSES!! loss of good jobs in housing industry hurt. "

jvc wrote on Nov 22, 2007 12:29 PM:

" It is alright that the area does not have high paying jobs as long as and after all we are bringing democracy to Iraq! "

Add Your Comments or Letter to the Editor

First name only. Comments including last names, contact addresses, email addresses or phone numbers will be deleted. All comments are screened before they appear online, so please keep them brief. Comments reflect the views of those commenting and not necessarily those of the North County Times or its staff writers. [Click here](#) to view additional comment policies.

Name:

Comments:

Post Comment

To begin a discussion on this topic visit our [Online Forums](#).
To send your comment as a [Letter to the Editor](#) click here