

# Help Us Help You

Empowering the homeless community to  
change their lives.

Myrtle Beach Police Department

Street Crimes Unit, 2007

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## **Introduction**

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina is a community located in one of the fastest growing areas in the United States according to the 2004-05 Census Bureau. Myrtle Beach has a year round population of approximately 25,000, and covers approximately 22.5 square miles. Due to its mild climate, miles of beachfront and numerous attractions, Myrtle Beach's population increases, often exceeding 100,000. Like many similar cities, Myrtle Beach has developed a very large homeless population, 647 according to United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Homeless Count, January 2007, which has posed a variety of concerns related to law enforcement.

## **Scan**

The Scan was conducted by completing research of statistical data, officer and public observations and interactions and surveys by the Myrtle Beach Police Department, City Government officials, organizational representatives and community volunteers.

## **Analysis**

Analysis of the data collected revealed conclusions under three main areas of concern:

### ***Knowledge***

Evidence was collected through preliminary field interviews and general informational sheets establishing that 1 in 5 homeless individuals are unaware of or lack the knowledge of agency assistance in Myrtle Beach and surroundings areas.

### ***Criminal Behavior***

Escalating incidents of nuisance related crimes like loitering, trespassing, public intoxication and breach of peace occur most frequently with homeless individuals in the

downtown area of Myrtle Beach causing increased problems with quality of life issues within the community.

### ***Employment Opportunities***

The surveys reflected that those surveyed came to the City of Myrtle Beach and surrounding areas to seek better employment opportunities to improve their lifestyles.

### **Response**

Responses to the analysis included the development of a community board to address the main factors:

- Increasing the availability of agency assistance programs by providing informational service brochures giving explanations of services.
- Holding community meetings to encourage involvement in assistance programs.
- Enactment of City Ordinances to address nuisance related behavior.
- Providing information on the most frequent violations.
- Increased enforcement of laws and ordinances in identified areas.
- Working with government and community officials to increase employment opportunities, lodging facilities and vocational training programs within the City of Myrtle Beach.

### **Assessment**

Assessment of this project can only be measured by the use of the assisting agencies, which has increased in excess of 50% over the past six months. The project has developed relationships between the police department, community leaders, community members and transient individuals assisting in efforts to decrease homelessness within

Help Us Help You

the City of Myrtle Beach and promote self-reliance and empowerment within the homeless individuals.

## **Background**

In 2003, the City of Myrtle Beach conducted an analysis of the downtown area of the city known as 5-Points. This analysis included evaluating the calls for service within the 5-Points area, the population, the commercial and residential makeup, community opinion, as well as the environmental factors specific to this area. One specific concern of community members was the growing population of homeless individuals which became the focus of the initial evaluation.

This area of the city houses three-day labor businesses, the Street Reach Mission, several city parks, a public library, and the Community Assistance Center also known as the soup kitchen. All of the above entities combined have led to a haven for homeless individuals. Myrtle Beach has become a comfortable location for the homeless population. It has developed into an ongoing problem because the day labor and community kitchens present the possibility of more vagrancy.

After completing this analysis, members of the City of Myrtle Beach Police Department in addition to those within the government determined that specific attention was needed in this area due to the increase in criminal activity as well as nuisance related incidents.

In an effort to reduce these incidents and work with the community to develop an improved quality of life, the Myrtle Beach Police Department developed a plan of action. This plan of action included assigning community team officers to the area to concentrate on addressing specific issues particular to the 5-Points area. These officers

would be responsible for increased police presence in the area and addressing specific ongoing problems related to crime and nuisance behavior.

During the first two years, the 5-Points community team was faced with a great deal of challenges. The challenges included developing a network of communication within the business community and surrounding residential community. In addition they were exposed to one of the underlying issues and concerns of the community itself, homelessness.

As the community team continued their efforts, they became well aware of the presence of homelessness specific to the 5-Points area. While observing and interacting within the community they became familiar with the patterns of homeless individuals in the community. The HUD Homeless Survey (January 2005-2007) indicated that the Myrtle Beach area has approximately 647 homeless individuals. Although this survey is done to obtain the most accurate count of homeless individuals in the area, consideration needs to be made for other variables, which include homeless individuals living in and out of low rental hotels. It is evident in various population assessments conducted within the City of Myrtle Beach that there is always an influx of visitors within the summer season. The fact that the annual survey is completed in January fails to account for the huge influx of population experienced in the spring, summer and fall.

As efforts continued, community team officers working through educational and Business Watch meetings, utilized innovative ways to deal with the growing homeless issue, which gave birth to the concept of the Help Us Help You project.

## **Scan**

In an effort to get to know those living and working in the community and to curb the increased criminal activity in the area, officers conducted field interviews and identified homeless individuals. They then organized a meeting consisting of local labor employment agencies, business leaders and community representatives who work with the homeless plight on a daily basis to analyze the concerns and work on a plan of action for the solution. Representatives from Chapin Library, Community Kitchen, Helping Hand, Community Thrift Shop, Staff Zone, and Little River Medical Center were all in attendance. Officers then met with government officials and citizens to discuss their views of homelessness in Myrtle Beach. The three main areas of concern were:

- Knowledge
- Criminal Behavior
- Employment Opportunities

These three concerns became the focal point of the project and assisted in influencing whose involvement was needed for the success of the project. The initial scan also included the evaluation of crime statistics in the 5-Points area and statistics related to specific nuisance related behavior.



- 6,238 calls for service were recorded in the 5-Points area from January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006.
- From January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006 a total of 1,766 calls for service in Myrtle Beach relating to Disorderly behavior.
- From January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006 a total of 3,809 calls for service in Myrtle Beach relating to Public Intoxication.
- From January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006 a total of 314 calls for service in Myrtle Beach relating to liquor law violations (open container, drinking in public).
- From January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006 a total of 3,782 calls for service in Myrtle Beach relating to Loitering.
- From January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006 a total of 1,900 calls for service in Myrtle Beach relating to Trespassing.
- From January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006 a total of 350 calls for service in Myrtle Beach relating to Breach of Peace.

As the initial data was collected community officers set out to determine effective ways to gain information and provide additional data in order to adequately address the identified concerns. The community team officers requested the assistance of several agency representatives who interact regularly with the homeless population. The idea was to find out the underlying issues in order to develop and implement solutions to these contributing concerns.

## **Analysis**

Attendees discussed the fact that the city and the police department wanted to provide assistance through knowledge, criminal deterrence and opportunities to the homeless population. The majority believed that this could be accomplished by providing the homeless with knowledge and means to help themselves.

The officers and local business owners, leaders, and managers collectively came up with several ideas and concerns to address. These ideas included providing information and direction to those seeking it. Specifically discussion included, why homeless do not take advantage of service agencies within the Myrtle Beach area. This was attributed to a large portion of the homeless population not having the knowledge or the abilities to understand the assistance they need. This could be attributed in part to having mental problems and the limited facilities available for the mentally ill. This in itself has resulted in many individuals forced to live on the streets as they feel that they cannot make it in the real world. In addition, many homeless have mental issues that go untreated by conventional medicine and these individuals end up treating themselves by abusing drugs and/or alcohol.

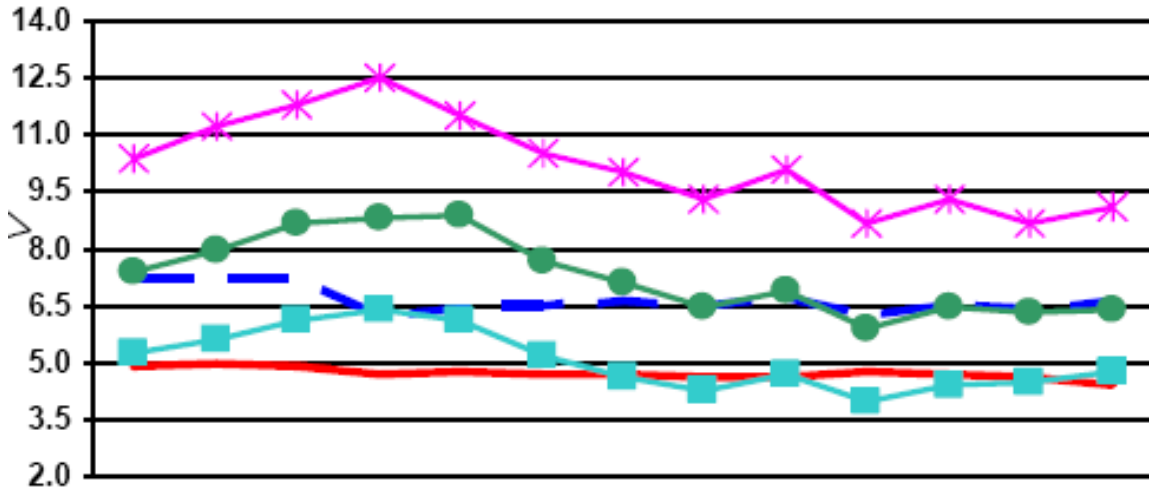
With this in mind, field interviews were conducted with homeless individuals focusing on specific questions dealing with their knowledge of support agencies. It was determined that 1 in 5 individuals who were interviewed had no knowledge that Myrtle Beach had several agencies available to assist with health problems, housing and employment. Specifically these individuals did not have names of the agencies or contact information. With this ratio so low, officers met with Helping Hand, a local

agency that assists homeless individuals with obtaining food and crisis assistance.

Helping Hand maintains a database of all clients in order to monitor activity within the community and services rendered. In October of 2006, 1,497 individuals were served by Helping Hand alone, however Little River Medical Center who provides medical and counseling assistance only saw a quarter of these clients. The difference in many cases is attributed to the lack of knowledge about where individuals can receive assistance and who is eligible for treatment.

Other ideas focused on employment. The South Carolina State Employment Security Commission reported that in October of 2006, the unemployment rate for Horry County was 4.8 percent compared to the state rate of 6.6 percent.

**Unemployment Rates  
October 2005 - October 2006**



	Oct-05	Nov-05	Dec-05	Jan-06	Feb-06	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06
— SC	7.2	7.2	7.2	6.2	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.7	6.2	6.5	6.4	6.6
— US	4.9	5.0	4.9	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.4
—●— Georgetown	7.4	8.0	8.7	8.8	8.9	7.7	7.1	6.5	6.9	5.9	6.5	6.3	6.4
—■— Horry	5.3	5.6	6.1	6.4	6.1	5.2	4.6	4.3	4.7	4.0	4.4	4.5	4.8
—*— Williamsburg	10.4	11.2	11.8	12.5	11.5	10.5	10.0	9.3	10.1	8.7	9.3	8.7	9.1

The concerned focused that with the increase of homeless individuals within the City of Myrtle Beach, the unemployment rate has also increased. This could be attributed in part to issues with identification, skills and vocational training.

Related ideas identified transportation issues and severe shortage in the city and county assisted living housing. It was discussed that several local motels offer reduced rates for day labor workers however proof of employment needed to be established prior to securing housing. The only other housing alternative within the City of Myrtle Beach is the Street Reach Mission. The Street Reach Mission is located in the 5-Points area in the heart of Myrtle Beach, and is a faith-based non-profit facility. This facility focuses efforts towards reaching out and providing temporary housing to homeless individuals. This facility screens their clients and has several regulations, which eliminate many homeless individuals from consideration to this program. Some of these regulations include alcohol and drug use, employment and involvement in criminal activity.

In addition to the ideas and concerns related to employment, housing and health, many concerns were brought up focusing on criminal activity and law enforcement. It was discussed that many fugitives are presently in and have been located in the Myrtle Beach area. These individuals often have inappropriate or no identifications. This has created a policy in which day laborers must have a Social Security card with proper corresponding identification. Although this is a positive change, it has also eliminated some individuals from participating in work programs because of lost or stolen identification. This issue needed to be addressed as local day

labor businesses report that between 20 to 25 percent of workers for the day labor businesses end up with full-time employment. Hence, when homeless people are working, they are contributing to society, not dependant upon it, legally or illegally.

Other concerns discussed by attendees included the enforcement of laws and the judicial system in the Myrtle Beach area as being too lenient on arrestees. The court system procedure as well as jail overcrowding and courtesy arrests were explained. Community Police officers examined the amount of homeless individuals who were being consistently incarcerated for various violations and decided to brainstorm for better ways to deal with this issue. In January of 2006, the Myrtle Beach Police Department's Records Section completed an analysis of arrest records for the timeframe of January 2005 through December 2005. This analysis revealed that 1% of subjects arrested within the city limits of Myrtle Beach were listed as homeless. It was also revealed that several of these same subjects were repeat offenders, going to jail on a consistent basis. Violations included, but were not limited to public intoxication, loitering, park ordinance violations, trespassing, and drinking in public. Community police officers developed a survey and went directly to the homeless for information.

Additional issues addressed relating to law enforcement included problems created by areas of private property located out of the City of Myrtle Beach, within wooded areas in Horry County's jurisdiction. Several campsites have been constructed in these areas. Criminal activity in these areas, to include high and aggravated assaults, domestic disputes, alcohol and drug abuse is sheltered from the public's eye and is rarely enforced. In addition to private property, problems were also discussed relating

to public places. The local library was having problems with excessive loitering and disturbances with some homeless individuals. Chapin Library addressed the issue by rearranging their furniture (chairs/couches) to make them less comfortable and secluded, which resulted in less loitering and problem. Another issue with loitering focused on a city park. This park removed all benches completely, resulting in very few homeless people loitering.

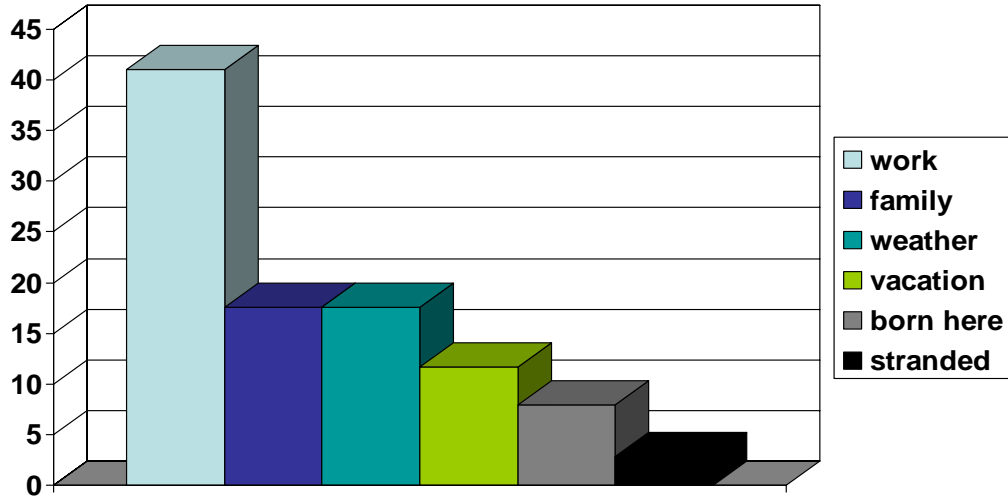
After the first meeting, the discussion was evaluated and in an effort to get input from the individuals that homelessness affects, a five-question survey was devised. This survey asked the following:

- 1) Why did you come to Myrtle Beach? How long have you been in Myrtle Beach?
- 2) Where do you live?
- 3) List one or two things that you consider a problem in your life.
- 4) List one thing that could really help you get out of your situation.
- 5) Do you want to continue to live as a homeless person? (this also means from hotel to hotel)

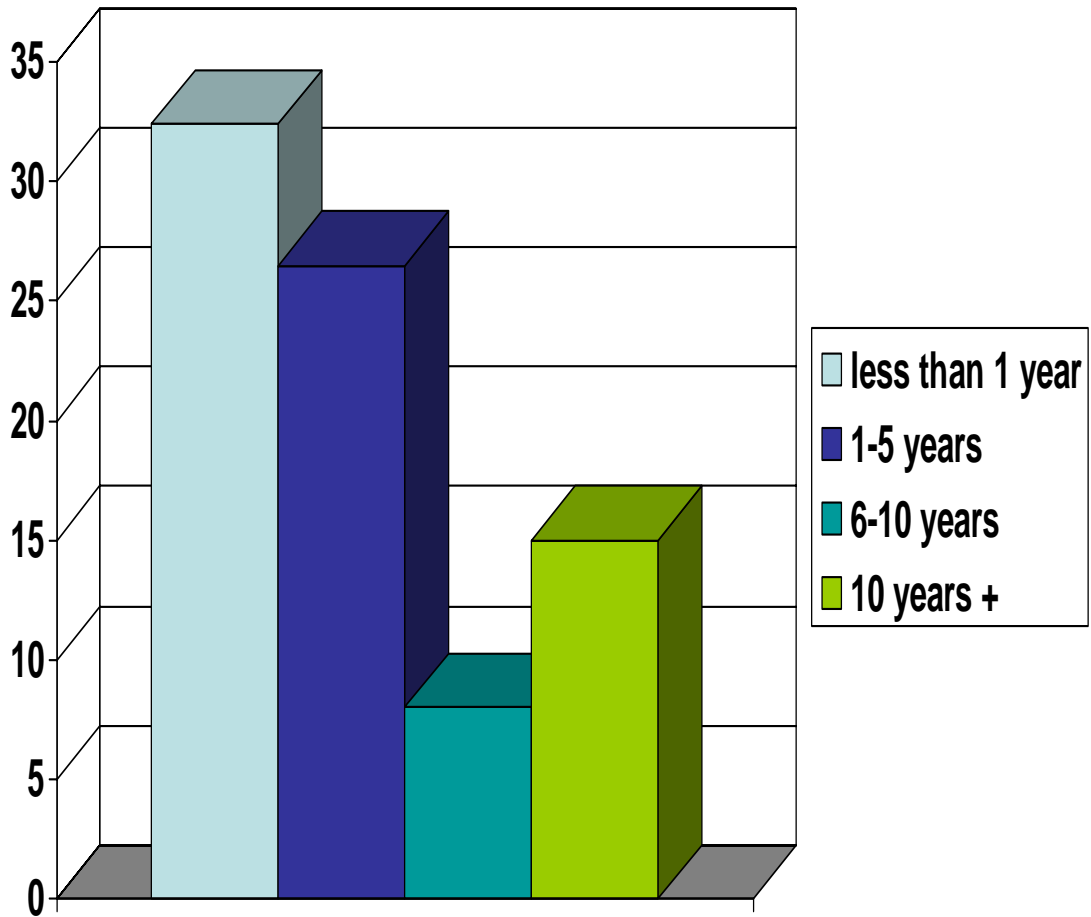
Surveys were distributed at Day Labor agencies, the Chapin Memorial Library, and by Helping Hand. Over the next two weeks (November 2006), numerous completed surveys were collected. Although it was difficult to reach all homeless individuals due to work schedules, individuals being incarcerated and those who did not want to participate, a great deal of data was collected and a mixed sample of approximately 10 % of Myrtle Beach's homeless population was established as reflected in the below charts.

# Help Us Help You

## 1. Why did you come to Myrtle Beach?

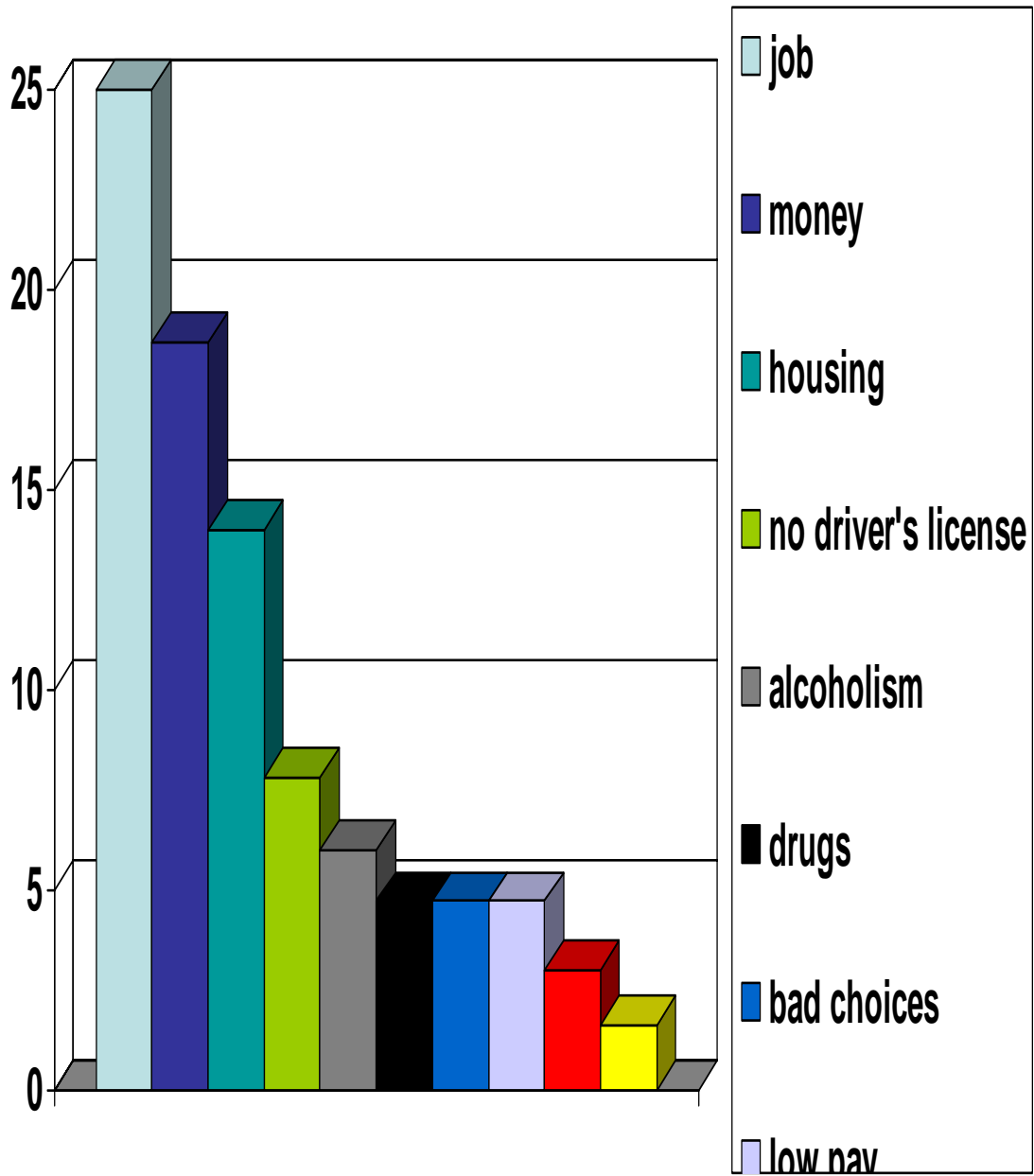


1 b) How long have you been in Myrtle Beach?

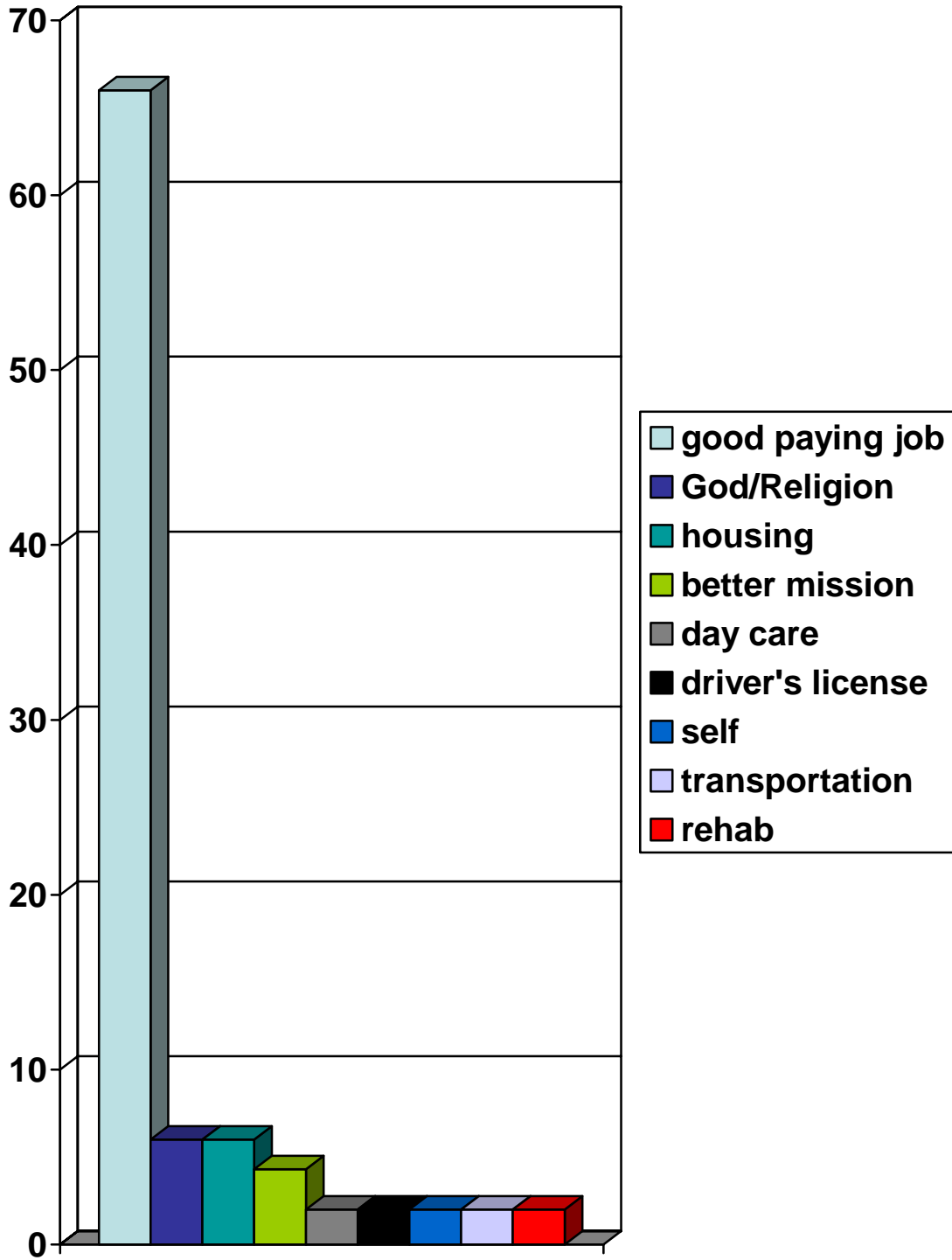




3. List the things that you consider a problem in your life:



4. List one thing that could really help you get out of your current situation?



5. Do you want to continue living as a homeless person? 100% answered "No."

After compiling this data, several key issues were determined by this analysis and discussion. It was concluded that a large majority of the homeless community lack appropriate identification. It appeared to be an ongoing cycle throughout the homeless community as many individuals are transient which has increased the likelihood of identification to either get lost or stolen due to nature of lifestyle. This alone, poses a huge problem in regards to seeking employment and driver's licenses. Without the proper documents like a birth certificate or passport an individual in most cases would be unable to acquire employment. In addition, without money or the ability to communicate this need (language barriers or mental health issues), it is almost impossible to obtain a birth certificate or social security card.

It was also determined that many of the homeless individuals surveyed and in attendance have medical and/or mental health issues. Fortunately, Myrtle Beach has a center to assist people of low or no income with these concerns. Little River Medical Center, which is located just blocks from the Community Kitchen services most of our homeless population by offering medical care and counseling. Routinely, a number of military veterans who did not realize they were entitled to military benefits are seen at this location.

Other avenues that were discussed and have been utilized to assist in addressing mental health issues includes the use of Probate Court. Over the past year, Officers

have been able to assist at least four homeless subjects by petitioning Probate Court to court order mental evaluations. Officers have been successful at getting chronic offenders, with no family known, and mentally ill treatment, by working with counselors at Waccamaw Center of Mental Health and the employees and judges of the Horry County Probate Court.

With these factors and the provided date in mind the officers developed a proposal to reach as many homeless individuals as possible to work and find avenues to assist in developing a life plan to get them off the streets and on their feet as soon as possible. The goal was to reach as many individuals as possible with quality assistance and not focus on quantitative results. It was abundantly apparent that most of the homeless community are able to help themselves, however they need to want to do this, and may need encouragement to assist in this effort, which is the objective of this program.

In November of 2006, the group of local agencies, city employees and law enforcement met again to discuss the results of the surveys. They agreed that both the City and the Police Department have been taking steps to deal with the homeless issue, but little was being done to encourage a change in the mindset of many homeless subjects. A list was compiled of numerous non-profit and governmental organizations and agencies that are located throughout Horry County. Officers contacted each agency, and invited each to attend a "Help Us Help You" meeting. These agencies included the Social Security, Veteran's Affairs, DHEC, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Day Labor businesses, local churches, Street Reach

Mission, Haven House (family shelter), G.E.D. Representative, Merchant Marine Representative, Birth Certificate program (this has received special grant funding as a result of this first event), Salvation Army, Public Transportation Authority, U.S. Army Recruitment and Shared Care.

Fliers were distributed to all day labor businesses, Chapin Library, Street Reach mission, and places of worship. Officers and Community Kitchen personnel informed lunch attendees each day (for week prior to meeting) of the meeting and the contents of discussion on December 14, 2006 at the Community Kitchen.

The group (later formed as a Board) met additional times prior to the event to finalize details and address concerns. The objective was to focus on addressing the concerns of the community to increase the potential for changing the quality of life for one individual at a time.

## **Response**

After reviewing data collected in surveys, community officers and leaders from non-profit organizations planned a public assistance meeting, referred to as "Help Us Help You". On December 1, 2006, the first "Help Us Help You" meeting was a success. Over twenty agencies and approximately 150 homeless individuals attend the meeting. Participants were not required to sign in, to eliminate any fear of checking for warrants however they did receive a ticket as they entered. This ticket was to be carried to each agency visited (it was required that participants visit at least 5 agencies in order to receive a free "gift". One volunteer was at the door counting the homeless individuals that entered. Our homeless participants gathered in the assembly area after picking up cookies and tea. Each agency and representative was then introduced. Officers were stationed in the lobby with members of Community Thrift Shop to distribute the "gifts" to attendees that attended five or more tables. Ninety-five out of 150 tickets were collected and those 95 participants received gift bags that included toiletries, coats, and blankets.

During the week after the event, community officers were stopped daily by homeless individuals who thanked them for holding the event and many inquired about future meetings. The Myrtle Beach Police Department Officers and several of the agencies held a debriefing that same week and were pleased to hear such positive responses and inquiries about the location, time, and date of future "Help Us Help You" meetings.

As the success of the event spread throughout the community several community members, to include those involved in a program sponsored by the Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, "Leadership Grand Strand," were thrilled with the attendance and community interest of the first "Help Us Help You" meeting. This success spawned additional interest and served as a recruiting source for volunteers from "Leadership Grand Strand" and members of the Myrtle Beach Rotary Club. These members assisted in planning the second "Help Us Help You" event, which was planned for February of 2007. At that time, the group formed into a board consisting of representatives from Myrtle Beach Police Department, Leadership Grand Strand, Myrtle Beach Rotary Club, Community Thrift Shop, Community Kitchen, and Helping Hand. One of the challenges on the forefront of the board to address was determining how many people benefited from the program. It was determined though that word of mouth spoke for itself and suggested that most of the attendees were extremely pleased and most participants benefited from the event. The ability to adequately show results would be impossible without an individual designated to monitor each case individually. The board has determined that the lack of birth certificates played a significant role in many subjects' inability to get a job, identification cards, housing, health benefits and driver's licenses.

Participation in the second meeting for "Help Us Help You" in February of 2007 was high. Some of the same agencies were invited in addition to employment recruiters, more local churches, programs directed at fathers (divorced or separated), CASA (Citizens Against Spousal Abuse), and the Rape Crisis Center, among others.

Once again, a large majority of the homeless individuals visited the "birth certificate" program table. The second meeting had 95 participants. After discussing the numbers with the board to include members of the local day labor agencies, it was determined that more homeless were "at work" than at the first meeting, and 59 turned in tickets for the gift bags.

The board discussed other avenues to address as well. A chart was developed to provide information on the future of Help Us Help You by a board member. In addition the board is seeking non-profit 501(3-c) status to assist in the endeavors of this program. Attached are letters from former homeless individuals who were assisted by the Help Us Help You program.

The second event brought more media coverage, and additional awareness to city leaders of the benefits of this program. The Help Us Help You Board is currently working on developing a site for a Day Shelter, which would be staffed by a paid employee, as well as volunteers and community service subjects. The focus would be to allow the homeless community a place to complete laundry, take a shower, notify certain agencies of interest, and pick up mail (use this as an address while awaiting residency). Rules and regulations would be strictly enforced. This center would act to empower many homeless, and encourage a sense of accomplishment, thus reducing the incidents of certain crimes.

To continue in the efforts of awareness and the objects of "Help Us Help You", community officers continue in their efforts daily by distributing brochures which provide a list of assisting agencies and contact numbers, places for shelter and food,



hurricane shelters, and a list of City Code and Ordinances that are violated most often within the City of Myrtle Beach.

As community officers continued to work in the 5-Points and surrounding areas they were able to carry on completing assessments of criminal activity and social issues. In doing so they also assessed what could assist in addressing both concerns. This information was then provided to the Myrtle Beach City Council for review. In order to address some of the criminal activity created by social issues Myrtle Beach City Council enacted several ordinances to assist law enforcement with problems generated by the transient population.

For example, several individuals waiting for employment within the public view were drinking in public, urinating in public and breaching the peace. Myrtle Beach City Council enacted Ordinance 14-85(b)(9), which makes it unlawful to loiter in public places for the purpose of seeking employment; i.e.: congregating or remaining in a public place for the purpose of seeking occasional or day labor employment which may be characterized by remaining idly in a public area contiguous or adjacent to a construction related business, temporary employment agency, or day labor establishment.

Other similar incidents generated within the public view included these same types of incidents occurring in our public parks and playgrounds. Myrtle Beach City Council enacted the Park Ordinance, 14-139. This ordinance prohibits the act of sleeping over a one hour in a public park, and bringing items conducive to camping to a public park.

In addition to problems generated on public property, community members also wanted to address issues occurring on private property. Many property owners and businesses have assisted police by posting “No Trespassing” signs at four corners of said property, and city judges have been able to remove frequent offenders from our city parks by issuing trespass notices.

Although our city incorporated a variety of ordinances that has mainly involved citations and/or arrests affecting those engaged in nuisance and related behaviors, this has not assisted in changing the habits or behavior of individuals involved in this activity, specifically homeless individuals. Like many jurisdictions, our jails are overcrowded. This has resulted in many arrestees staying in jail a few hours, and released at bond hearing appearances with guilty pleas and a sentence of time served.

**Assessment:**

Although the homeless problem will never be eliminated, the "Help Us Help You" program has been able to assist many individuals and enable them, giving them the tools to get off the streets. Due to the fact that Myrtle Beach has an extremely transient population, it is very difficult to demonstrate solid statistics and percentages of an improvement.

Observations by law enforcement have revealed that there is a significant decrease in the amount of homeless individuals loitering. One year ago, it was determined that homeless individuals committed 1 out of 10 crimes. Most homeless individuals will not change their lifestyle but new ordinances enacted and enforced by the City of Myrtle Beach over the past several years has resulted in a decline in many homeless related violations.

After discussions with the assisting agencies within Myrtle Beach after the public meetings, it was determined that there has been a significant increase in inquiries and involvement by homeless individuals. In addition the client listing continues to increase at the Community Kitchen, Helping Hand and the day labor businesses. Twenty-five individuals obtained their birth certificates after the December meeting and several more applications have been filed.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of the "Help Us Help You" program is to effectively change the lifestyle of homelessness in the Myrtle Beach community by providing the means to assist individuals. The Board continues to expand upon the "Help Us Help You" program. The goal of the program remains focused on quality of the assistance that is offered rather than quantity of individuals attending. The documented attendees that receive information are the prime objective.

The program is about people being empowered to help themselves. Many homeless individuals do not have transportation, which serves as a roadblock at times. The meetings provide the opportunity for homeless individuals to receive information from a variety of non-profit organizations in the same place at the same time. Each agency is responsible for following up with individual clients from this program, which generates more results. The program has already been a catalyst for community interest and involvement to include interest from the Horry County School System in addressing homelessness within the schools.

The increase in awareness of the homeless population has led the police department and city officials to develop ways to help reduce homelessness within the City. The City Planning Department has introduced plans to build a Unity Village. This concept is like a shelter however the objective is to instill individuality and the development of life skills to provide independent supported living. The hope is to create an apartment type atmosphere where individuals will be screened through an extensive

## Help Us Help You

application process and monitored to promote positive behavior while rewarding life changes. This is a long-range plan.

In addition, future plans will enable homeless to go to one location (Day Shelter) in order to get in touch with the exact agency needed to assist with the mission of the program. With the assistance of community members and the dedication of the Board members, "Help Us Help You" has been a success and will continue to grow.

**Agency & Other Information**

Community policing and the problem-solving approach to addressing issues within the city has been implemented within the philosophy and mission of the City of Myrtle Beach to be "First in Service." This approach has also been established within the Help Us Help You Board to focus on addressing concerns and issues that arise within the community by evaluating the concern and developing and implementing solutions.

In order to continue this approach within the project, community team officers have attended training in Community Policing, Hurricane Disaster Assessment, Palmetto Pride Education, and South Carolina Anti-Litter Program as well as Mental Health Training. These blocks of training have assisted in addressing issues that are specific to our community and to this project.

Due to the fact that Myrtle Beach has an extremely transient population, it is very difficult to establish accurate assessments of this project. The amount of time and dedication by the community team officers as well as the board members established the success and effectiveness of the projects objective and will continue in the motivation and growth of the project.

**For More Information Contact:**

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1101 Oak Street  
Myrtle Beach, SC. 29577  
(843) 918-1826

## Help Us Help You

### Agencies and Resources Offering Help for Homeless, Low Income and Special Needs Persons.....

**Homeless Outreach** 497-3960 or 997-8350  
Call for assistance and information if Homeless

**American Red Cross** 477-0020  
Emergency assistance for fires, hurricanes

**Associated Charities** 448-6321  
Assistance, clothing, etc., when available.

**Bethany Christian Services** 236-5433  
24-hour hotline for adoption and mothers' and babies' services

**CareTeam, Inc.** 236-8429  
Assistance and support for HIV/AIDS

**Citizens Against Spouse Abuse** 626-7595  
CASA: emergency shelter and assistance, 24-hour crisis intervention counseling for parent and child, etc.

**Catholic Charities** 488-2112  
Assistance and services for those in need

**Christian Missions** 293-2411  
Food, clothing, household items, utilities, etc., in emergency situations

**Coastal Rescue Mission** 448-1352  
Food Pantry - Loris

**Coastal Workforce Center** 234-9675  
Job listings, unemployment assistance and guidance.

**Community Kitchen** 448-9383  
Free lunch served daily, Monday - Friday.

**Department of Social Services** 444-6107  
Myrtle Beach - food stamps

**Ecumenical Clothes Closet** 651-3751  
Clothing for the needy

**Faith-based Community Coalition** 448-3949  
Assistance for special needs persons, homeless and those in crisis

**Family Outreach** 248-5392  
Services and supplies for mother and new baby.

**Grand Strand Community Against Rape (Rape Crisis)** 448-3180  
24-hour crisis help and rape prevention assistance

**Helping Hand - Myrtle Beach** 488-8451  
Crisis assistance, food, rent and utility assistance on a limited basis

**Helping Hand - North Strand** 399-0862  
Crisis assistance, food, rent and utility assistance on a limited basis

**Helping Hand - South Strand** 238-4594  
Crisis assistance, food, rent and utility assistance on a limited basis

**Little River Medical Center** 839-3939  
Medical assistance at rates based on income. Free homeless assistance available at the Alliance Inn Clinic

**Myrtle Beach Haven** 626-2427  
Temporary shelter, food, clothing and referrals for homeless.

**New Dawn, New Day** 457-8738  
Ministry serving women who are leaving sexually oriented businesses

**People for Caring** 421-1749  
Program for unwed mothers, offering housing, food

**Project Lighthouse** 626-1446  
Strategic planning, survival, youth services.

**Rape Crisis Center** 448-3180  
24-hour crisis help and rape prevention assistance

**Salvation Army** 488-2769  
Emergency food, clothing and household items; emergency rent and utility assistance; jail ministry; disaster programs

**Street Reach Mission** 626-3643  
Crisis care for needy; emergency shelter, food and clothing, as available

**Swash Park Ministries** 340-6588  
Meals, food, clothing, blankets, sleeping bags and, occasionally, shelter

**Waccamaw Center for Mental Health** 347-4888  
Mental health services for individuals, families and groups

### Hurricane Evacuations.....



If an evacuation is ordered by the governor, local news media, police, the American Red Cross, the city and other organizations will identify evacuation shelter locations, most likely across the Intracoastal Waterway. Transportation to the shelters will be available, and pick-up locations will be identified. These will include Coastal Grand Mall, Food Lion at 79<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and Colonial Mall. *Do not stay if an evacuation is ordered. Storm surge, strong winds and debris are deadly.*

In an evacuation, always take your...

Identification (Driver's License, Social Security Card, etc.)  
Important Documents (Marriage License, Birth Certificates, etc.)  
Medications and doctor's name and number  
Children's special information (schools, special needs, etc.)

### Shelter.....

**Homeless Outreach Line**  
843-497-3960 or 997-8350

**Street Reach** (overnight for men and women)  
843-626-3643  
509 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Myrtle Beach

**Myrtle Beach Haven** (family shelter)  
843-626-2427  
1 Terminal Street, Myrtle Beach

### Food.....

**Community Kitchen** (free lunch, Monday-Friday, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.)  
843-444-9383  
1411 Mr. Joe White Ave., Myrtle Beach

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Myrtle Beach, SC 29577  
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**Pedestrian on Highway** \$148

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## A Guide to Shelters and Emergency Assistance



Provided by

**Myrtle Beach Police Department**

# HELP US HELP YOU

When: Thursday, December 14, 2006  
1:00-3:00 PM



Where: Community Kitchen  
1411 Mr. Joe White Avenue

Who: YOU!

People will be available to help you with:

- I.D.'s
- Social Security
- Veteran's Benefits
- Jobs
- Birth Certificate
- Health Care



Come join us and receive:

Coats  
Hygiene Kits  
Refreshments





TRANSIENT POPULATION

# S.C. tallies homeless to better grasp needs



"Hello. Anyone home?" John Fullwood asks as he slowly lifts open a tent flap as he checks campsites for homeless people Thursday in the woods near Withers Swash. Fullwood is a patrolman with the Myrtle Beach Police Department.

## Local agencies hope survey leads to improved services

By JANELLE FROST  
The Sun News

Terry Salsberry and Patricia Corder had plans to get married Thursday. But the homeless couple said they could not afford the marriage license.

Salsberry, 47, has been living in the woods on 10th Avenue North for a year.

Corder, 51, has been living in the same woods for two months.

"It's very safe back here," Salsberry said Thursday while standing near their tent.

The couple were among the hundreds of homeless people who were counted Thursday in a statewide effort to provide a more accurate picture of homelessness locally and throughout the state. Service providers aim to identify where the homeless people are and why they are homeless to better target services for their needs and possibly find a way to stop homelessness.

Along with the count, people also have been filling out



Before going to find work, raking yards off 10th Avenue North, Thomas Herratt takes a drag from a cigarette Thursday.

## National numbers on homelessness

**800,000** | Number of people on any given night who are homeless in the United States

**3.5 million** | Number of people who experience homelessness in the course of a year

Source: Michael Stone, director of community organizing for the Washington-based National Coalition for the Homeless.

## MB has vision for complex that moves people off streets, into jobs

By BINA RITCHIE  
The Sun News

Those who help the area's homeless population say they need to expand to accommodate an increasing homeless population and demand on services. A Myrtle Beach project, dubbed Unity Village, could help solve those problems if organizers can secure a site.

Cliff Rudd, Myrtle Beach community development administrator, is leading the project to move homeless shelters to a location away from Myrtle Beach's downtown with on-site health care and job training. There has been no progress in securing a location since 2001, he said.

The Unity Village could help solve the area's homeless problem and provide a more accurate picture of homelessness locally and throughout the state. Service providers aim to identify where the homeless people are and why they are homeless to better target services for their needs and possibly find a way to stop homelessness.

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DA

FROM P



## HOMELESS

From Page 1A

a survey Wednesday through today for homeless conditions across the state to have a better understanding of the services needed for the homeless.

The count is being conducted nationwide this week at the request of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to help plan future federal funding.

When last counted in Horry County in November 2003, 778 people were found homeless. Figures were not available for Georgetown County.

South Carolina chose Thursday to do its count with the help of volunteers.

Judy Swanson, executive director of Grand Strand Housing and Community Development Corp., said local agencies expect figures from the count to show a larger homeless population.

"The shelters are full, and the number of people applying for food stamps are up," she said.

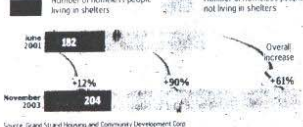
Swanson coordinated the local effort for the seven counties involved in Total Care for the Homeless Coalition — Horry, Georgetown, Williamsburg, Lee, Kershaw, Clarendon and Sumter.

She expects to have the data for those counties by the end of February.

In Horry County, volunteer teams went to various areas including day-labor places,

## Homeless numbers increase

The number of homeless people in Horry County grew from 484 in June 2001 to 778 in November 2003.



Source: Grand Strand Housing and Community Development Corp.

hotels, shelters and the woods.

In Georgetown County, Al Teague, who is a counselor and works with the Waccamaw Center for Mental Health, led a team of about 20 volunteers from local agencies who deal directly with the homeless, he said.

"By doing the count, we will be able to better serve the homeless," Swanson said.

"We know the current services available to them are not adequate enough. Everyone we talk to needs dental and eye care. We certainly know there are gaps. We're looking to see where those gaps are to fill them in."

The information collected can help agencies better determine which services are needed to end homelessness in every city, said Pat Ranalli, case manager at Alliance Inn Apartments, a transitional apartment complex in Myrtle Beach.

"More people are willing in Horry County to tell us they are

INSIDE | THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE HOMELESS IN HORRY COUNTY INCREASED FROM 484 IN 2001 TO 778 IN 2003

## Help Us Help You



PHOTO BY CHARLES SLATTY, The Sun News

legitimately need a job. There are other people who want to make cash to feed a habit, and they're the problem."

Kim Pomeroy, Myrtle Beach police officer

# MB aims to curtail loitering in town



Men wait along the sidewalk Thursday outside Able Body Labor in Myrtle Beach, hoping to find work for the day. Myrtle Beach City Council is exploring the option of creating new zoning changes in which these day-labor businesses relocate closer to the businesses they serve. The council is hoping this change could cut back on loitering, littering and public intoxication.

## Council considers zoning limits for day-labor sites

By EMMA RITCH  
The Sun News

Notice people hanging out all day outside day-labor businesses? So do Myrtle Beach officials.

City Council is questioning whether a zoning change could curb the problem of loitering, littering and public intoxication near businesses that supply workers for construction and industrial sites on a day-by-day basis. Police familiar with the area say the morning crowds

include workers and people who have no intention of getting jobs.

City officials say making future day-labor businesses locate closer to the businesses they serve would prevent problems when unemployed people loiter in tourist areas.

"We need day-labor businesses because there are people who legitimately need a job," said Myrtle Beach Police Officer Kim Pomeroy, who patrols downtown. "There are other people who want to make cash

to feed a habit, and they're the problem."

City Council discussed the ordinance during Thursday's workshop but probably will refrain from voting until the city attorney can iron out legal questions about the zoning restrictions.

Current day-labor businesses wouldn't have to move from the downtown area but would be barred from expanding in their present locations. New businesses would have to locate in designated zones around

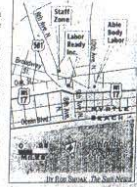
Seaboard Street and between U.S. 901 and Mr. Joe White Avenue.

Costa DeLuca, vice president of Staff Zone on Eighth Avenue North, asked City Council to ensure day-labor businesses remain close to the workers. If the employees can't travel by foot they will create a nuisance, he said.

"Would they be paralyzing? Would there be more crime?

Please see **WORK** | Page 5C

## Day labor companies in Myrtle Beach



## WORK

From Page 1C

problems? Probably so," DeLuca said.

DeLuca said his company had a payroll of \$800,000 in 2005. Employees worked 120,000 hours in that time at an average wage of \$7.16, he said.

City Manager Tom Leath said Thursday the problem is not the businesses or employees.

"There are other people who don't really want to get jobs," he said. "They want to sell dope to people who are getting jobs or who hang around."

Ken Cecil, branch manager of Able Body Labor, said businesses can't control who loiters on the public streets outside their businesses.

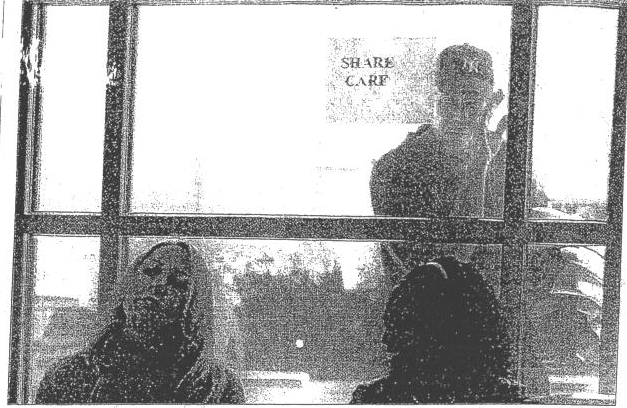
Myrtle Beach has the largest unsheltered homeless population in the state, Planning Director Jack Walker said.

The Planning Department is continuing work on a project dubbed Unity Village that could solve some of the homeless and temporary-worker problems in the downtown area, he said.

The project could incorporate day-labor businesses, health care, homeless shelters, transitional housing and counseling in an area close to Myrtle Beach's commercial and industrial areas.

"We would welcome whatever the capacity of the site would hold," Walker said. "At the local level we need to try to figure out ways to make life better for those people."

► Contact **EMMA RITCH** at



PHOTOS BY JANET BLACKMON MORGAN *The Sun News*  
 Lee Oliver peeks in the window toward the agencies gathered at the Community Assistance Center in Myrtle Beach for the "Help Us Help You" event on Thursday. Information available included Social Security benefits, jobs and housing, health care, veteran's benefits and how to get birth certificates and other forms of identification.

## Help through dialogue

### Agencies laud hands-on approach to homeless

By JOSH HOKE  
*The Sun News*

A recent count of homeless in the Myrtle Beach area recorded a nearly 400-person decrease from 2005, but officials say they don't expect the change to significantly affect federal funding for programs aimed at helping that population.

Regardless of the number of homeless, some homeless services advocates said a program conducted in Myrtle Beach Thursday could be a model for future homeless aid efforts on the Grand Strand and elsewhere.

The program Myrtle Beach officials titled "Hahn The Hahn

time. Those who attended received consultation on various issues and problems that the homeless face.

"I would like to see it done more often," said Mike Chessser, president of the S.C. Homeless Coalition. "We often sit down with service providers, but rarely do we actually talk to the homeless."

"We need to find ways to sustain [the program] so it becomes the norm."

Chessser said, Myrtle Beach's program is the first of its kind that he has heard about in the state. But he said he is hopeful that such a hands-on approach to providing assistance to the homeless



PHOTOS BY JANET BLACKMON MORGAN *The Sun News*  
 "I have been from the White House to the outhouse," Bennie Swans tells a group gathered for the "Help Us Help You" event Thursday. "I have been there, and I can tell you there is a way out. We are here to help you find the way out." More than 100 people participated in the event at the Community Assistance Center in Myrtle Beach. Information available included Social Security benefits, jobs and housing, health care, veteran's benefits and how to get birth certificates and other forms of identification.

#### EVENT

From Page 1A

problem throughout the Grand Strand.

"This is still somewhat of an experiment," he said. "We probably don't have all the players involved. Definitely a move in the direction of this kind of help. I think that's why we are getting the response that we are, because they can get a lot done in a short amount of time."

Officials also said such programs could help quantify the homeless population in the area.

Preliminary numbers from last month's Horry County homeless count show that volunteers counted 637 people, compared to 1,000 in 2005.

Officials said a number of factors may have affected the count, including weather and the availability of jobs and

David King, an organizer of the Myrtle Beach area count, said that the 2007 numbers could be lower because he felt the 2005 study was a little more involved.

He said the decrease in numbers won't affect funding the area receives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Officials say events like the "Help Us Help You" program could help them define the population — by numbers and by needs.

About 85 homeless residents and representatives from more than 20 agencies were at the Community Kitchen Thursday. The event attracted fewer homeless than a similar program in December, according to Kim Poirier, of the Myrtle Beach Police Department, but she said the goal at this point is to reach as many people as possible.

"We know we aren't going to

last year. "Maybe it's three people, but I don't care."

Twenty-five people obtained their birth certificates after the December event, potentially clearing hurdles for job openings that were closed before they received proper documentation, Poirier said.

That has helped people like Audra Rodriguez, who faced an afternoon full of uncertainty — where to sleep and how to eat — but was still smiling when she left the Community Kitchen.

She learned on Thursday that her birth certificate should arrive soon, meaning that a permanent job could be on the horizon.

"Some [homeless] people just don't know how to go about taking care of business," said Rodriguez, 68. "These people can help us and guide us."

Federal agencies are also providing support for the local homeless population. HUD

earlier this week. Nearly \$500,000 dollars will go into the Myrtle Beach area, including funding for the Alliance on Apartments off 10th Avenue North and the recently opened (Balsom Place, a 25-unit homeless shelter, said Cliff Ruid with city of Myrtle Beach.

Those figures show that the politicians in Washington, D.C., understand the problem, said Bill Rhee, director of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of North Carolina. However, he warns that money won't be the only solution.

"We are going to have to be creative," he said. "We've got to look an increased amount into homeless assistance... It's clear the problem of homeless is very multifaceted. It's going to require people from a variety of disciplines, government, non-profit, for-profit agencies to come together."

To whom it May Concern,

I was in need of my birth certificate  
because I have never had one of  
My own. This birth certificate  
will help be with housing, work and  
other resource that I will need  
in my life to get me + My  
family they need to be.

Thanks  
for your

help

~~Maria~~

Maria Hatziadakis

I am very grateful  
for the Assistance pro-  
gram for getting my  
birth certificate for me.  
I have got a job ; also  
fixing to get a marriage  
License and get married.  
Thanks for the assistance  
program.

Sincerely,  
Jimmy Lancaster

Help Us Help You

Copy



I. D. Assistance Program  
P. O. Box 563  
Myrtle Beach, S. C. 29578

Ms. Sandra D. McNeill, Director  
Public Service Operation  
The City of New York  
Office of Vital Records  
125 Worth Street, CN4  
Room 133  
New York, NY 10013

Dear Ms. McNeill:

Thank you for your letter of May 2, 2007, requesting additional information on [REDACTED]

“Help Us Help You” is a non-profit identification assistance program in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. We are requesting your assistance in obtaining the birth certificate of one of our citizens. Enclosed is a local newspaper article to further explain our mission.

Enclosed is the application for the birth certificate of Mr. [REDACTED]

Mr. [REDACTED] is seeking employment and needs a birth certificate in order to obtain a South Carolina driver’s license. Therefore, we are requesting your assistance in researching his identification and releasing it to him in care of the “Help Us Help You” I. D. Assistance Program. We have included a signed release statement and a check for \$15 to cover the cost required for his certificate as well as self-addressed, stamped envelope. I have enclosed my picture identification as the case worker for Mr. DeLorge.

If you need further information, please contact me at (843) 444-9383 office or (843) 839-4854, fax. You may email any questions to [dianneram1@yahoo.com](mailto:dianneram1@yahoo.com).

Sincerely,

Dianne B. Ramsey  
I. D. Assistance Program Director

HELP US HELP YOU

I. D. Assistance Program  
P. O. Box 563  
Myrtle Beach, S. C. 29578

So:  
I am very please with the results  
of having my ~~fact~~ Birth certificate it  
help me with Social Security. I've been in  
the military and I havent had one in my  
life time. Without your ~~serv~~ secret  
none of these thing would possille. Thank  
you for your SERVICES.

Jerome Horn

To whom it May Concern,

I was in need of my birth certificate  
because I have never had one of  
My own. This birth certificate,  
will help be with housing, work and  
other resource that I will need  
in my life to get me + My  
family they need to be.

Thanks  
for your

help

~~Maria~~

Maria Hatridorley



## Help Us Help You

### Agencies and Resources Offering Help for Homeless, Low Income and Special Needs Persons.....

**Homeless Outreach** 497-3960 or 997-8350  
Call for assistance and information if Homeless

**American Red Cross** 477-0020  
Emergency assistance for fires, hurricanes

**Associated Charities** 448-6321  
Assistance, clothing, etc., when available.

**Bethany Christian Services** 236-5433  
24-hour hotline for adoption and mothers' and babies' services

**CareTeam, Inc.** 236-8429  
Assistance and support for HIV/AIDS

**Citizens Against Spouse Abuse** 626-7595  
CASA: emergency shelter and assistance, 24-hour crisis intervention counseling for parent and child, etc.

**Catholic Charities** 488-2112  
Assistance and services for those in need

**Christian Missions** 293-2411  
Food, clothing, household items, utilities, etc., in emergency situations

**Coastal Rescue Mission** 448-1352  
Food Pantry - Loris

**Coastal Workforce Center** 234-9675  
Job listings, unemployment assistance and guidance.

**Community Kitchen** 448-9383  
Free lunch served daily, Monday - Friday.

**Department of Social Services** 444-6107  
Myrtle Beach - food stamps

**Ecumenical Clothes Closet** 651-3751  
Clothing for the needy

**Faith-based Community Coalition** 448-3949  
Assistance for special needs persons, homeless and those in crisis

**Family Outreach** 248-5392  
Services and supplies for mother and new baby.

**Grand Strand Community Against Rape (Rape Crisis)** 448-3180  
24-hour crisis help and rape prevention assistance

**Helping Hand - Myrtle Beach** 488-8451  
Crisis assistance, food, rent and utility assistance on a limited basis

**Helping Hand - North Strand** 399-0862  
Crisis assistance, food, rent and utility assistance on a limited basis

**Helping Hand - South Strand** 238-4594  
Crisis assistance, food, rent and utility assistance on a limited basis

**Little River Medical Center** 839-3939  
Medical assistance at rates based on income. Free homeless assistance available at the Alliance Inn Clinic

**Myrtle Beach Haven** 626-2427  
Temporary shelter, food, clothing and referrals for homeless.

**New Dawn, New Day** 457-8738  
Ministry serving women who are leaving sexually oriented businesses

**People for Caring** 421-1749  
Program for unwed mothers, offering housing, food

**Project Lighthouse** 626-1446  
Strategic planning, survival, youth services.

**Rape Crisis Center** 448-3180  
24-hour crisis help and rape prevention assistance

**Salvation Army** 488-2769  
Emergency food, clothing and household items; emergency rent and utility assistance; jail ministry; disaster programs

**Street Reach Mission** 626-3643  
Crisis care for needy; emergency shelter, food and clothing, as available

**Swash Park Ministries** 340-6588  
Meals, food, clothing, blankets, sleeping bags and, occasionally, shelter

**Waccamaw Center for Mental Health** 347-4888  
Mental health services for individuals, families and groups

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