

Sunday, Sept 22, 2013

with her cellphone. The victim sustained multiple injuries to her face and was remain anonymous by calling Crimestoppers at (336) 349-9683.

Committee eyes aiding homeless through winter

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REIDSVILLE — How long can a person stand in the cold on a winter night?

For 438 people in Rockingham County, that's their reality.

The Rockingham County Regional Committee Balance of State Continuum of Care met Thursday, Sept. 19, to discuss how to help the homeless both this winter and for the long haul.

Seventy-four families are homeless in the county. In those families, 110 are children.

Of the 438 people without a home, 268 don't have any shelter, and those are just the known ones.

"We have no way of knowing how many homeless we actually have," Dick Frohock said.

Some families get creative. One family lives in a magnolia tree. Another lives in a tent at Lake Reidsville. Others find laundromats, libraries and McDonald's to wait out the cold.

The committee knows the importance of keeping the homeless safe this winter. It plans to open a homeless shelter in Eden

on Dec. 18. The shelter will house 18 people, including children.

The committee doesn't want to stop there, though. It wants to get Reidsville or Western Rockingham involved.

"The need is there but the community needs to come together," Ellery Blackstock, who led the meeting, said.

Funding for a homeless center is lacking.

"The funding has been unavailable to us for a long time," Frohock said. "We've got to understand that."

Frohock said with the amount of homeless people found in the county, the committee has more power than ever to make a shelter happen.

The committee has work to do, though. It needs to find a location, get permission of the city councils and figure out if they want a resource center or an overnight shelter.

The committee decided to form a subcommittee, which will meet at 10 a.m. Thursday at the Reidsville Housing Authority to narrow and focus its ideas and come up with a plan to help the western and southeastern sides of the county.

The average cost of a hospital visit because of a fall is estimated at \$15,000. That doesn't include room and board, X-rays, physical therapy and other potential medical expenses.

"If we have a fall without an injury, it significantly impacts their trust in themselves," Haithcock said. "They have a fear they didn't have before, a huge fear of losing independence."

After a certain age, falling also impacts mortality rates.

"They have an increased mortality along with falls once they have the first fall with injuries," Haithcock said.

That is why the Annie Penn Hospital staff says they are doing every-

son sits on the side of the bed, but for patients with more of a risk the alarm signals if the person shifts their weight too much.

Haithcock said the hospital uses the alarms because independent-minded patients may refuse to use the call button if they need help. She said even patients that are cognitively impaired and with extra items like bed pans, cords and wires and medical equipment around the bed, they can end up falling.

The hospital also began using chair alarms, which have the same concept and plays song like, Old McDonald Had a Farm for the alarm.

Joseph Ribkoff

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