

One-day snapshot shows drop in homeless population

By Anna Bakalis

Posted April 14, 2010 at 12:59 p.m.



Ventura County's homeless population decreased 17 percent from 2009, according to the 2010 Homeless Count released today.

The one-day snapshot on Jan. 26 tallied 1,815 homeless people, down from 2,193 in 2009.

The count was spearheaded by the Ventura County Homeless and Housing Coalition, with help from hundreds of volunteers.

The decline was consistent across all cities with significant homeless populations, said Cathy Brudnicki, executive director of VCHHC.

The county breakdown was: Ventura, 601; Oxnard, 520; Simi Valley, 229; unincorporated areas, 223; Thousand Oaks, 106; Santa Paula, 54; Ojai, 52; Camarillo, 15; Port Hueneme, 9; Fillmore, 5; and Moorpark, 1.

While the one-day count was down, officials noted that between 5,000 and 7,000 people are homeless over the course of a year in Ventura County.

The study also showed there also was a 25 percent decrease in the number of homeless families from the previous year. And there was a 6 percent overall decline from 2007, when 1,961 homeless people were counted. A count was not conducted in 2008.

Coalition officials attribute the decrease to several factors, including additional federal stimulus money, community-based homeless prevention and assistance programs, and charities that help needy people stay housed by providing them food.

Joseph Colletti from Urban Initiatives designed the count and is assisting the coalition in interpreting the results.

"Implementing the recommendations in Ventura County's 10-year strategy to end homelessness is having the desired effect," Colletti said in a prepared statement.

To view the report, log on:

<http://www.vchhc.org>.