

Current Issues Monitoring Report For the week ending July 18, 2008

10 year plan to end homelessness

Local government and nonprofits in **Seattle, Washington** added about 500 permanent apartment units for homeless people this past year. Two-and-a-half years into the 10 year effort, Seattle has reached 30% of its overall goal: they've added 1,449 low-income housing units and have about 8,000 to go. The new apartment buildings include services for people with addictions, mental illness or disabilities. The 10-Year Plan To End Homelessness is aimed at reducing the demand homeless people place on public services such as the criminal justice and medical system by providing them stable housing and support services.

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/cgi-bin/PrintStory.pl?document_id=2008058621&zsection_id=2003925728&slug=homeless18m&date=20080718

Church & state issues

Officials say that 31 churches were damaged or destroyed during the recent flooding in **Cedar Rapids, Iowa**. Estimates are that it will cost between \$500,000 to \$2 million to repair each one. FEMA officials told church leaders this week that they do not qualify for FEMA dollars because of the separation of church and state. Still, churches are encouraged to apply for the funds anyway to "get the ball rolling," and possibly make other funds available.

<http://www.gazetteonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080712/NEWS/508393378/1006/news>

Gay marriage

The state senate voted to repeal the 1913 law that bans out-of-state couples from getting married in **Massachusetts**. In 1913, Massachusetts allowed inter-racial couples to marry but the majority of states did not. The law was passed to prevent couples from getting married in Massachusetts if their union would be illegal in their home state. Eight gay couples from surrounding states challenged the law in 2006 but the state supreme court refused to overturn it. The house is expected to vote on the measure sometime soon. If both houses pass the measure, the governor is expected to sign it.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-07-16-massachusetts-gay-marriage_N.htm

Sex offenders / housing / services

Some **Denver** residents are up in arms again about sex offenders living at The Salvation Army's Crossroads Shelter. Local residents found that about 100 men list Crossroads as their address on the state's sex offender registry, but our own Major Neal Hogan reports that there are no more than 30 currently living there. That means more than 60 offenders are "whereabouts unknown." There is some dispute about what the numbers really mean, but the police say that there are only 15 offenders unaccounted for. They also say that they've received a \$217,000 grant to spend on technology to track offenders at the shelter. The neighbors are understandably upset, but Major Hogan is quoted as saying that it's better to welcome sex offenders into a monitored program rather than have them living on the street.

<http://www.rockymountainnews.com/news/2008/jul/17/globeville-wants-answers-high-number-sex-offenders/>