

Housing problems worsen

By TOM LONG
Sentinel staff writer

11-19-89

SANTA CRUZ — An empty nursing home will be turned into a hotel for seniors, and a mobile home park will be built at UC Santa Cruz while authorities scramble for places to house thousands left homeless by the earthquake.

"There are close to 3,000 people out of their homes," said the county's Luther Perry, head of the Housing Recovery Task Force, Saturday. He painted a picture of the immensity of the housing problem for federal, state and local

officials gathered at the County Government Center to discuss earthquake recovery.

In an effort to house at least some of those people, the county plans to lease Garden Nursing Home — which state health authorities closed a few months ago because of poor administration — and make it home for about 30 older people displaced by the quake. And, following an offer of land by UCSC, planning has started for using Federal Emergency Management Agency funds to build a mobile home park there.

About 500 people are still living in tent cities and shelters in the Watsonville area and hun-

dreds more homeless are staying in motels throughout the county. But Perry said many, many more people still are staying with friends, relatives and people who simply offered temporary housing immediately after the quake.

Perry said that people's hospitality is beginning to be tested, and he is worried about where those homeless will go when their temporary situations are permanently closed.

"There are a lot of people who are kind of making do," Perry said. "But we don't bar-code these people to keep track of them. There are

Please see HOUSING — A5

Housing / Picture is grimmer

Continued from Page A1

thousands of people who we don't know where they are."

The problem is that many who had temporary accommodations are now losing them, Perry said, and the true number of people left homeless is becoming more apparent.

According to a report the the Board of Supervisors will review Tuesday, 590 homes were destroyed countywide in the quake, 1,955 homes sustained serious major damage and 668 mobile homes were either destroyed or suffered major damage.

"We've been concentrating, obviously, on the people who have no place to go; but there are lots of people who don't have ~~their~~ place to go," Perry said.

Adding to the homeless problem, Perry said, is a new dilemma — landlords with relatives left homeless by the quake are evicting tenants so the relatives can move in.

Perry says his most pressing problem is finding homes for the 400 people who were living in four residential hotels that have either been demolished or will take months to renovate.

"Of the 400 people who were in hotels, probably 250 of them are in very tenuous circumstances," said Perry. "We have ways to help maybe 50 to 100 of those 250 who need help."

Perry said planning is under way to build mobile home parks in south county. One such site which will hold 44 mobile homes is already being built, and Perry said he is working on cutting red tape so three other sites in the Watsonville area, as well as one in Pajaro, can be used for mobile homes parks.

More than 150 mobile homes intended for quake homeless are being held at Fort Ord, waiting for the completion of sites with utilities and water lines that they can be hooked to. And FEMA has said that it will import as many mobile homes as the county can find sites for.

So far, the only site that has been approved is not expected to be ready to house people for another three weeks.