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Rogue Retreat eyes expansion of site, services

A local organization that provides housing for homeless people recovering from substance abuse is gearing up for another expansion after already more than doubling in size over the past few years.



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By **DAMIAN MANN**

Posted Feb. 11, 2012 @ 12:25 am
Updated Feb 11, 2012 at 3:25 AM

A local organization that provides housing for homeless people recovering from substance abuse is gearing up for another expansion after already more than doubling in size over the past few years.

Rogue Retreat hopes to receive \$119,000 in grant funding to purchase a boarded-up house at 523 N. Riverside Ave. that is next door to an existing 11-unit complex that opened in 2009.

Chad McComas, chairman of the Rogue Retreat board of directors, said his organization wants to purchase the North Riverside house, then tear it down. In the short term, the property would provide additional parking for the existing complex.

As soon as his organization receives additional dollars, McComas said the proposal is to build at least a five-bedroom complex with a central kitchen area for homeless women with mental problems.

Rogue Retreat also owns an eight-unit townhouse complex on South Grape Street. Last year, the organization took over management of an additional 23 apartments throughout Medford and Central Point that are owned by the Jackson County Housing Authority.

McComas said the demand for housing has increased in the recession.

"So many people need our program, but we can't help them all," McComas said.

Rogue Retreat offers housing for the homeless on the road to recovery. No time limit is set on how long residents can stay in the housing units.

Residents are subject to inspections as well as random drug testing. They must enter programs that help them overcome a background of addiction, past criminal behavior and financial problems.

Residents must pay 30 percent of their income toward rent, even if it comes from government programs.

McComas said his organization seeks grants for communities that allow the purchase of properties in foreclosure, or where the owners have fallen behind in taxes.

Other local agencies are also trying to tap into \$300,000 in grants that will be available this year, he said.

With so much competition, McComas said he hopes his organization gets at least enough money to

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buy the Riverside property.

McComas said he hopes to get additional grant dollars in the next few years to build on the property.

Reach reporter Damian Mann at 541-776-4476 or email dmann@mailtribune.com.

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