

Red Cross opens warming centers tonight

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

PORTLAND — For the seventh time this season, the Oregon Trail Chapter of the American Red Cross will open emergency warming centers for Portland's homeless population as the thermometer drops. Three Red Cross centers are expected to open tonight: * Estate Hotel, 225 NW Couch — 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. * Cavalry Christian Ministries, 126 NE Alberta — 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. ****NEW**** Foursquare Church, 1303 SE Ankeny — 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. All locations will maintain an open door policy, so guests may come and go freely. Pets are welcome.

While the emergency warming centers will provide safe respite from the cold, a place to sleep, hot coffee and soup, they differ from traditional Red Cross shelters in that clothing and financial support are not be available. Warming centers also differ in that they allow pets, which is typically not the practice in Red Cross shelters. The Red Cross anticipates opening warming centers anywhere from ten to 20 times each winter and serving as many as 150 people each night that the centers are open. The Estate Hotel, which has opened on six previous occasions, averages close to 60 guests each time it opens. Volumes at the other sites are expected to increase as they become more established in the community. Warming Center Activation Requirements The City of Portland alerts the Oregon Trail Chapter when they believe conditions require the center activation. These circumstances include: Under DRY conditions * 25 degrees Fahrenheit or below, including consideration of the wind chill factor Under WET conditions * 35 degrees Fahrenheit or below, including consideration of the wind chill factor AND * Any snow/freezing rain/sleet OR * 1" or more of rain within 12 hours * Other combinations of weather conditions that place homeless persons at risk of loss of life or serious negative health consequences. Volunteers interested in staffing the Red Cross emergency warming centers should contact Mike Fish at 503-528-5699 or fishm@redcross-pdx.org. Shifts are still available, particularly the 5-8 a.m. time slot.

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