

Homeless suffer in Phoenix heat

by UPI

PHOENIX - Phoenix is trying to change its image as being mean to the homeless by assuring they have shelter and plenty of cold water this summer.

Last year, the National Coalition for the Homeless designated Phoenix as the 17th meanest U.S. city, out of 200, for how it treats the homeless.

"Phoenix has had a sorry history in dealing with the issue," said Jacki Taylor of the Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness.

That is changing, Taylor said, as Phoenix and other Arizona cities try to avoid mistakes that allowed 30 homeless people to die throughout the state during a heat wave in 2005, the Christian Science Monitor reported Monday.

With much of the West baking, temperatures in Phoenix were above 110 degrees F. for 12 consecutive days. Phoenix officials and faith-based groups have redoubled efforts to ensure the homeless have shelter, water and food during the hottest times of the day, Taylor said.

About half of the estimated 14,960 homeless in Arizona live in Phoenix.

Copyright © 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Homeless suffer in Phoenix heat by UPI