

organizer Katie Dee from Melissa Mona, a volunteer with the Egan Warming Centers that provide shelter for the homeless on freezing nights in Eugene, states, "Last year we averaged around 220-240 guests total each night we activated. This year we have activated twice, and the average is 183 guests. That is a significant drop."

Other groups working with the homeless have said that their numbers are not affected by the Occupy camp, but McCahill points out that social services are already drastically underfunded in Eugene and Lane County, and such services might worry about the risk of losing even more funding if they said the numbers being helped were going down. He says as well that the Occupy camp gives people a place to sleep who might not be comfortable with the Christian ideology of a place like the Eugene Mission.

Occupy opponents also have alleged that the camp has been allowed exclusions from the city code for its signs and structures. However, according to McCahill and Jonna, the camp has had visits from the fire marshal and city code inspectors. Jonna says it's ironic that the camp

kitchen's bank of batteries providing power, designed by an electrician who donated materials and services, was a problem for inspectors, while a cheap, possibly poorly made system from China would meet with approval.

Jonna says the visits from the city have stepped up, and as the Dec. 15 deadline looms, "It's the set-up for the fall."

Civil liberties attorney Lauren Regan is also an Occupy advocate. She says Occupy Eugene has been offered services from permaculture to architectural work for free, and that grants and donations from nonprofits are lined up, but Occupy needs a more permanent site for the camp. "Volunteers are solving this problem of homelessness that you've had for years," she says.

Regan says Occupy Eugene is willing to look at a site that is not a visible protest site for a longer-term camp. Protests could happen at places like the Park Blocks, while the camp could set up somewhere else, such as near the Skinner City Farm and "take on the homeless issue in a grassroots manner."

Regan estimates about 250 people use the current site a

night, sleeping in dwellings, some designed by experts, others with names like "Tartopia." A tall tipi, which Jonna says was a gathering place until the city began cracking down on the fire that kept it warm, sits near a tent for women to gather as well as near a large dome where meetings take place.

As if to punctuate what the Occupiers are saying about donations of goods and services, one man walks up to Jonna to talk about volunteering his electrical expertise. Someone else drops by with bags of oatmeal. "This kind of thing happens all the time," McCahill says.

The camp runs on contributions of everything from time and effort to donations of portable toilets and generators for electricity. The Occupiers say they hope that on Dec. 12, the City Council will vote to allow them to continue their activist experiment in helping the homeless to help themselves. **EW**

Upcoming Occupy Eugene events include a candlelight vigil at 4:15 pm Dec. 12 at City Hall before the City Council work session and lasting until 7:30 pm. Some Occupiers will be traveling to Portland for the West Coast Port Shutdown, also on Dec. 12. Go to occupyeugenemedia.org and westcoastportshutdown.org for more information



ESTEBAN



LAUREN REGAN



JAMIL JONNA

Skills and Labor Needed

An Occupy Eugene Task Force will be developing a permanent site for temporary unhoused living, as well as an educational and community space to continue OE's community service works. Meetings are currently taking place between OE and the city, and if there are any additional architects, electricians, builders, designers or others that are handy with tools and shovels who want to participate in this community project, contact one of OE's Task Force coordinators, Jeff Gent at jeffgent.eug@gmail.com to join or find more information. All are welcome as are financial contributions.

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