

KTVB.COM
IDAHO NEWS NOW

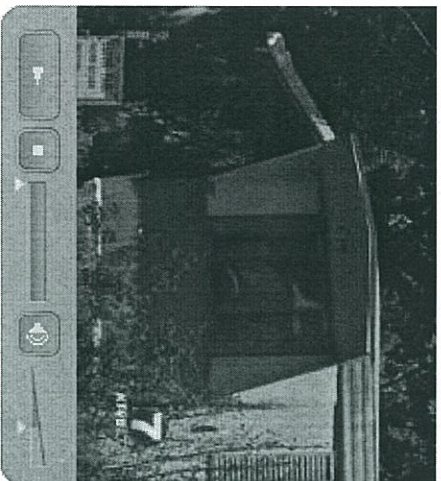
Idaho News

Many mobile home owners could soon be homeless

05:58 PM MDT on Thursday, May 15, 2008



BY **MONIQUE JAMES**



VIDEO 📺 Residents face an uncertain future

GARDEN CITY -- Hundreds of Treasure Valley residents are facing what they call a housing crisis - not one involving lenders and foreclosures, rather land being sold out from underneath their manufactured homes.

The manufactured homes at Woodlawn Mobile Home Park in Garden City are located on prime property near the Boise River.

Developers are purchasing the properties and changing the landscape, getting rid of the mobile homes and their residents.

Lavonne Unterbiner learned today that in a few months she and her father may not have a place to live.

"He's on social security and I'm on disability, so we don't make that much, this is about all we can afford, and if these go then I don't know where we'll be," said Unterbiner.

Right now, their residence is in the Dee Mar Mobile Home Park, but that property is up for sale.

"It hurts, we can't live nowhere else, the money situation is hard now as it is," said Unterbiner.

Patricia Hughes lives in a manufactured home in a senior community. The land there hasn't been sold yet but she fears it

will be - leaving her without a place to call home and without the money to buy a new one.

"It's just a totally uncertain future and I'm young enough to know that I'm probably gonna be around for another 20 years. Where am I gonna end up living?" said Hughes.

Right now, there are 17 other mobile home communities up for sale in the Treasure Valley. If and when they are sold, thousands would be displaced - something the Catholic Charities of Idaho views as a big problem.

"What we're seeing is that they have very little notice, they aren't told when the land is sold until after it's sold, and then they have an eviction notice," said Rosio Gonzalez, executive director of Idaho Catholic Charities.

Catholic Charities is housing and educating many of those evicted and preparing them for the possibility of losing everything.

"It's scary, being homeless. They gotta have somewhere for low-income people to go," said Unterbinner.

Catholic Charities will be holding a public town meeting on May 22.

Elected officials from Ada County, Boise and Garden City and the Idaho Legislature will be at the meeting to inform mobile home residents of their options and rights.

Residents in many of these mobile home parks own their manufactured homes, but do not own the property their homes sit on.

When that property is purchased, the homes must be moved or be destroyed, and moving can cost thousands of dollars.

CATHOLIC REGISTER, FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2008

PAGE 3

Catholic Charities joins drive to help mobile homeowners

By Will Rainford
Legislative Advocate

BOISE — Catholic Charities of Idaho has joined AARP-Idaho, Legal Aid of Idaho and the Boise State University School of Social Work in responding to a housing crisis involving area mobile home parks.

Currently, there are 14 mobile home parks in the Treasure Valley for sale. More than 800 residents, most of whom are seniors or families on fixed-incomes, could be evicted from their homes if the parks are sold. The sell-off is believed to be the result of the spike in land values, and the acreage is sought by developers wanting it for commercial or single-family housing.

Mobile home parks, also known as "manufactured housing communities," are often perceived as trailer dumps filled with undesirable people. However, these communities are comprised of white and blue collar workers, including teachers, construction workers and retired professionals. Their housing in the community may be the only home they can afford. Many residents own their mobile homes. When affordable housing is increasingly hard to locate, manufactured housing communities provide a valuable service.

Catholic Charities Execu-

tive Director Rosio Gonzalez said that working with mobile home park owners before the properties are sold could prevent significant hardship for homeowners later.

"While Catholic Charities can try to help people find housing if a park closes, the better model is to help residents protect, secure and transform their communities," she said. "We need to help residents of manufactured housing communities purchase their land." Gonzalez added that this was a part of the local drive, based on a similar U.S. bishops' national Catholic Campaign for Human Development effort, to eliminate poverty in Idaho.

The local coalition is supporting mobile home residents trying to raise funds to purchase the land cooperatively, thereby securing their homes. Catholic Charities and AARP-Idaho will hold a town hall meeting at St. Mark Church, 7960 Northview St., May 22 at 7 p.m.

At the meeting, mobile homeowners will tell their stories, and a member of Legal Aid of Idaho will also speak. Civic leaders and elected officials from cities in the Treasure Valley, Ada County and the legislature will be on hand to respond. A question-and-answer session is also scheduled.

Catholics in the Treasure Valley are invited to attend.

<http://www.ktvb.com/new>

html

5/16/2008