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CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County and City of Palm Springs Pop-Up Cooling Center Tests Ways to Serve Homeless Residents

Regional Partners to Seek Expansion of Services during Excessive Heat Waves

PALM SPRINGS – The County of Riverside and City of Palm Springs partnered this week to open a temporary cooling center for homeless residents to escape the evening heat. The overnight cooling center ran from Tuesday to Thursday evening. The pop-up center provided 70 overnight beds combined from Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights.

County Behavioral Health homeless outreach staff, joint funded by the county, the City of Palm Springs and Desert Healthcare District, ran the cooling center throughout the night. The center included sleeping cots, along with water and snacks provided by the county, City of Palm Springs, and donations from local businesses and residents. Outreach staff also connected people to needed crisis services. The City of Palm Springs offered the location of the community center and provided security throughout the night.

“While our homeless population has experienced many years of extreme heat, this year we are using our collaborative approach to tackling homelessness with extreme heat cooling centers,” said Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. “These centers not only provide relief during extreme heat events, but are also an access point to engage the homeless population with ongoing services and housing. While this is a short-term initiative, we are working with many regional partners to implement long-term solutions.”

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The first night the temporary cooling center opened on June 11, approximately 15 people stayed overnight. The second night, June 12, approximately 29 people stayed overnight. The last night, June 13, approximately 26 people stayed overnight.

The center allowed dogs on leash, as well as cats and other pets in carriers. Palm Springs also provides five daytime cooling centers throughout the summer.

“People who do not have access to a cool place can die in extreme heat,” said Palm Springs Mayor pro tem Geoff Kors, who serves on the city’s Homelessness and Affordable Housing Subcommittee. “Since the closure of Roy’s, the West Valley has lacked emergency overnight shelter during extreme summer heat. It is imperative that those who need a cool place to sleep have access to a cooling center. The City of Palm Springs and the county are continuing to work to ensure overnight shelter during the hot summer months.”

The daytime temperatures during this week’s heat wave were 114 degrees during the day and the low was 83 degrees at night.

This collaborative effort is part of a larger, regional initiative already underway among the Coachella Valley Association of Governments homelessness committee to serve residents experiencing homelessness throughout the summer and rest of the year. Finding sustainable resources and solutions to homelessness takes partnership among county, city, regional, nonprofit and faith-based organizations.

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