



People relax in the newly remodeled day center at the ARCHES Project facility on Commercial Street on Tuesday. ARCHES, a division of the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, moved to the space last fall and has more renovations planned. PHOTOS BY MOLLY J. SMITH/STATESMAN JOURNAL

# Center provides day shelter for homeless

Facility can hold 98 people at a time, has plans to open fully in November

Natalie Pate and Jonathan Bach Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

**H**omeless advocates unveiled a freshly remodeled day center this week that's meant to help fill a gap in services for Salem's homeless population. • The Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency held a soft opening of its day center Tuesday, with plans to open fully in November. • The center primarily serves members of the homeless population who live on the street, including those camping in parks, said Jimmy Jones, director of Community Action's ARCHES Project. • About 1,800 people are estimated to be homeless on the streets in Marion and Polk counties, Jones said. • The day center at 615 Commercial St. NE in Salem can hold as many as 98 people at a time and will focus on services during the day, versus overnight-shelters. • When it opens fully this fall, the center will have showers, laundry and hot meals, in addition to computers, free WiFi, telephone access, connections to all of ARCHES housing programs, some limited Oregon Department of Human Services programs and more. It will also have a higher capacity. **See HOMELESS, Page 4A**



Part of the new ARCHES Project facility on Commercial Street was still under construction on Tuesday. This space will become part of the kitchen and pantry. The door opens to the newly opened day center.

**“We cannot house all our homeless population. We need to have services that reduce harm and abate suffering for the ones waiting on housing.”**

**Jimmy Jones**  
Director, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency's ARCHES Project

# Homeless

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As it stands, people who are homeless have limited options of places to cool off, rest, eat or connect with local services.

When it comes to a slim number of places to take showers, Jones has said some homeless people wash themselves with baby wipes and in public restrooms.

People need a place free of obligations and requirements like sobriety, Jones said, a place with “no requirement other than mutual respect of other clients and staff.”

“We cannot house all our homeless population,” he said. “So we need to

have services that reduce harm and abate suffering for the ones waiting for housing.”

The center is paid for through the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program grant from Oregon Housing and Community Services, Jones said, along with smaller grants that provide staff, food and other services.

“Our goal is to end homelessness for as many people as we can,” he said.

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