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Core Service: Donors help community service patrol continue

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The Community Service Patrol performs an important public service by helping people who wind up on the streets downtown.

The community benefits because there are fewer inebriated people taken to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital who need medical or clinical treatment that cannot be found in an emergency room.

The goal of the CSP is to “ensure that all incapacitated people are treated in a fashion where their safety and well-being is ensured” and to “protect and promote downtown Fairbanks.”

From September 2010 to September 2011, there were 261 individuals who were picked up and transported a total of 1,555 times.

About 40 percent of the trips ended at the Fairbanks Native Association detox center, while 27 percent of the people were taken to the jail for a 12-hour sleep off and 23 percent were taken to the hospital. About 11 percent were taken to a home where someone could provide care.

During the past two years, the number of people taken to the hospital by the patrol has declined from about 450 to about 250, thanks in large part to the detox option. That in a year’s time the 12-hour sleepoff center at the jail is the destination for hundreds of people reflects a lack of community alternatives for treatment.

We want to thank the donor, who wishes to not be publicly identified, who stepped up and gave \$20,000 to meet the matching funds goal for the patrol and keep it going. The donation, coupled with other support from the community, allows the Downtown Association of Fairbanks to qualify for a \$50,000 grant from the city.

The patrol was facing a 2011 shortfall of between about \$4,000 and about \$20,000 to qualify for the full city grant, depending upon the results of its other year-end fundraising efforts. The additional funds provided by the donor will allow the patrol to start 2012 with a bit of an advantage, though it faces a difficult chore each year securing the funds for continued operations.

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, Doyon Limited, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the city and the borough have been core supporters of the program.

We also want to recognize the other new donors helping this program, including the 22 downtown property owners, who have chipped in at least \$13,602, and ExxonMobil, which provided \$5,000.

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