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Santa Ana Transit Terminal Open to Homeless During Storm

(Santa Ana, CA) – Eighty homeless individuals were housed Saturday evening at the Santa Ana Transit Terminal during Saturday evening rains, the first activation of the temporary shelter since its use was approved Friday by the Board of Supervisors.

“It is critical that we make emergency shelter available to those most vulnerable during severe rain events,” commented Orange County Board of Supervisors’ [Chairwoman Lisa Bartlett](#) as she toured the shelter on Sunday. “I am proud to say we made it happen.”

The unused bus terminal, approved during a special urgency meeting, remained open Sunday based on continued rain forecasts and the possibility of thunderstorms. Nearly one inch of rain is forecast through 4 pm with high wind gusts. “It makes good sense to use an existing resource like the vacant transit terminal to put a roof over the heads of those in need with the amount of continuing rain we are expecting this year,” added Vice Chair Michelle Steel.

The terminal will be opened as needed through June on an emergency basis to provide shelter. Mats and blankets are available as well as water, coffee and light snacks. The County has contracted with Mercy House, which operates the county’s two overnight armory shelters, to provide the temporary services at the empty bus terminal. “Serving those in need requires a portfolio approach. We are fortunate to be able to use the transit terminal as part of the County’s portfolio and provide short-term relief from severe storms,” remarked [Supervisor Andrew Do](#).

The use of the Santa Ana Transit Terminal as a rainy-weather, emergency shelter is a short term solution while the County works on development of a 200-bed, year-round emergency shelter/multi-service center in north-central Orange County sited by the Board of Supervisors last fall. “We get to look outside at the sheets of rain today from the comfort of our own homes and say, ‘I am blessed that I have a roof over my head for me and my family.’ Today we need to think about those that don’t and ask what we can do about it,” stated Supervisor Todd Spitzer.

Mercy House conducted outreach about the temporary shelter’s availability Saturday in the Orange County Civic Center, where the terminal is located. Teams with the County Health Care Agency also distributed information; 211 OC, which provides additional services to the needy on behalf of the County, also distributed activation notices to a broad network of public and private partners.

“The word is out that the shelter is open during heavy rains. This bus terminal provides a convenient and safe location for our vulnerable Civic Center homeless population during these treacherous El Niño storms,” said Supervisor Shawn Nelson.