

dicting, the impact will be even worse." The study did not break down anticipated losses by state.

Carolina tend to be about 100 to 200 hundred feet off the ocean — the area that will be at the highest risk between

SEE **EROSION**, PAGE 13A

County aims for fewer shelter customers

BY BONNIE ROCHMAN

STAFF WRITER

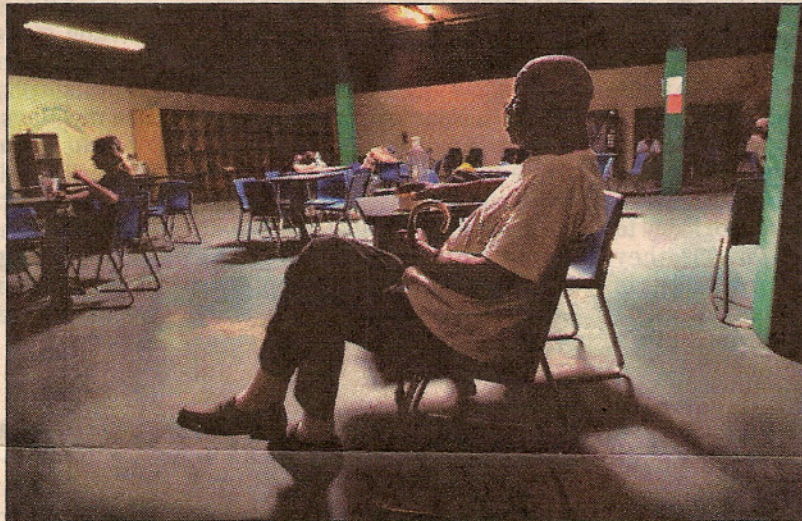
On a normal day, Kelvin Hardy shuffles around Raleigh's homeless shelter on South Wilmington Street, where a bulletin board with a rainbow exhorts him to "Dare to Dream."

And he does dare to dream — of a job that will make him happy, of a home of his own.

At 6:30 a.m. today, Wake County takes over management of the shelter from the city of Raleigh — and brings a change in philosophy designed to bring Hardy and people like him closer to their goals.

Under Raleigh's direction, the shelter was a place for people to sleep, eat and shower. Wake plans to add a framework of services, similar to those in shelters in Durham and Chapel Hill. Social workers and mental health and substance abuse counselors will be there every day. Health clinics, HIV testing and job-finding services will be available part time.

"We're putting a support system in place" for the



The supportive services Wake County is adding to the shelter it takes over today may help Willie Mack Sr. achieve his dreams.

STAFF PHOTO BY COREY LOWENSTEIN

SEE **SHELTER**, PAGE 12A

TODAY

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time to cook

What's the rush? Take time to create a meal with love and care, but use that slow cooker that you and others have so unknowingly dismissed.

Food — Page 1F



TODAY

Today: Limited sun; stormy evening. High 85, low 70.



TOMORROW

Thursday: Rain and storms likely. High 83, low 66.

Page 10B

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Comics ... 8E

Deaths ... 8B

Editorials 14A

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Food ... 1F

Landers ... 2E

People ... 2A

Television .6E

Wednesday 1E

SPORTS

As the hours tick down toward the NBA draft, the talking and the deal-making goes on as the players anxiously await the magic hour.

Page 1C

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SHELTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

homeless, said Mary Jean Seyda, who is overseeing the transition for the county.

"Some of them won't be happy because they'll be nudged by case workers. It's going to be an atmosphere of, 'Yes, you can stay here,' but also, 'What are you doing to get out of here?' We really want them to leave and be successful and not come back in."

That's what Hardy, 29, says he wants, too. He already imagines the trailer and the four or five acres of land he'll buy if he has a paycheck he can count on.

"Some days it seems possible, and some days it seems it's not going to happen," said Hardy, wearing a T-shirt, khakis, work boots and a rueful smile.

"I just need to find that perfect job. I think the county may be able to help me. If somebody really wants to get out of here, it's going to be a better environment."

But it's still not the environment Wake County wanted.

The shift from city to county control has taken 10 years. It has been that long since city officials first asked why they were saddled with running a shelter, a role more commonly undertaken by counties. Throughout the 1990s, Raleigh City Council members argued that Wake was better equipped to run a shelter because of its involvement in social services.

But as recently as four years ago, Wake County Manager Richard Stevens said the county didn't want the responsibility. "We're in the human services business," he said in 1996. "But we're not in the sheltering or housing business."

Yet negotiations continued.

Last year, during wrangling over the transfer, Wake Human Services board members rejected the site on South Wilmington Street, two gaping former warehouses, as too expensive to renovate and prone to flooding. The county proposed a shelter downtown, but the city balked, fearful of merchants' ire.

In December the county capitulated and accepted the current site, the one that Human Services director Maria Spaulding once called "a very sorry location."

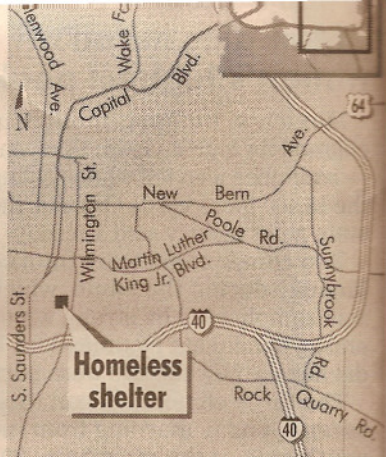
"It's the only location that the city would approve — the only one," she said. "We're going to make the best of it. See, no one really wanted the shelter, but not having an agreement at all would have just caused more suffering for people who have no voice. You just can't ignore these people."

On a typical summer night, 225

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The News & Observer

Officials estimate there are 2,200 homeless in Wake. Many stay with relatives or friends. If they all converged on the shelter, they would be let in, Seyda said, although there wouldn't be enough beds. There are only about 250, army-issue metal frames with thick plastic mattresses.

Quarters will be tighter than usual come mid-July, when all operations move from the front building to the back building, which has been used only for sleeping. The front building is the day shelter, a sprawling, dark square lit by nine bare bulbs where a few dozen people sit listlessly on plastic chairs. There are two televisions, two pay phones and a row of vending machines. There are no windows.

It's where people who have no work for the day hang out. It's also where they eat. Lunch on Monday was vegetable soup and crushed doughnuts fished from an oversized plastic bag.

The county will begin renovating this place in the fall at a cost of \$5.2 million, of which the city is paying \$1.9 million. Running the shelter requires \$1.3 million, all of it paid by Wake, which has hired Urban Ministries of Raleigh as the administrator.

In the days leading up to the changeover, details have been king. How does staff handle a fight, for example, or treat a homeless man with dignity? How much toilet paper should be ordered for the first month? Seyda got 48 industrial-size rolls and hopes it will be enough. She also decided upon towels, spurning pricey cotton for disposables — woven, absorbent paper sheets that cost 24 cents each.

Hardy isn't aware of this minutiae. He is more concerned with holding down a steady job, maybe at Bojangle's, where he used to work.

For now, officials can only speculate that on-site counseling will help. Lester Johnson, the city's shelter manager, thinks it will. County officials plan to track how many of those counseled end up back here.

Hardy is optimistic. He's tired of watching television and dealing cards at the day shelter. He's ready for some tough love, ready to get out of here.

"It's not as far away as I think," he said. "I'm counting on it."

On a typical summer night, 225 people sleep at the shelter. That number jumps by 50 when cold visits the county. There are three homeless men for every homeless woman. Starting today, women must move to the Ark shelter on Cabarrus Street, which has been converted to a women-only shelter. Homeless couples will be separated, which irritates one woman who said she'll use the \$51 a day she makes cleaning construction sites to find a hotel

Bonnie Rochman can be reached