

City of Reno sweeps up homeless community

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Posted: Fri 12:42 AM, Nov 22, 2019



RENO, Nev. (KOLO) -

A homeless camp under the Wells overpass off of East Commercial Row was cleaned up this morning, upsetting many of those who lived there.



Many homeless were grabbing their belongings and leaving the area under the overpass. Bruce Mckaig said they were forced to leave their living space.

"Some of us don't really have a choice," said Mckaig.

After a 24 to 48 hour notice to evacuate, the City of Reno, Reno Police Department, and other agencies cleaned up the homeless community, at the end of East Commercial Row near the train tracks.

The city says this is done to make sure public property is kept clear of health and safety issues, but for Mckaig, he said he knows it's his fault for getting there but being removed--is only setting him back.

"I'm just trying to get my feet out underneath me somehow and get back into an apartment and start living my life again I have four kids," said Mckaig.

City officials said, this is a nationwide problem and we see it first hand in Northern Nevada due to multiple factors such as a lack of affordable housing and mental health and addiction issues. Mckaig said the city isn't doing enough to help solve these problems.

"I've lost six jobs this summer that pay 12 to 18 bucks an hour because the city doesn't have some structure set up for this homeless issue, there are thousands of us out here," said Mckaig.

Director of Community Services Jamie Schroeder said, before the sweep is conducted, the homeless are informed about the resources our area offers to help their current situation. During the cleanup, they removed items like used needles and human waste.

"There are resources available at the community assistance center. We want to make sure that we continue to have that human compassion element while balancing that we are making sure that we choose to maintain a healthy and clean environment. So we do make sure that they are aware of the resources that are available and that in fact there is space at the community center." Said Schroeder.

The city said it knows the problem won't be solved overnight, but by educating our homeless, officials are hoping to help them get off the streets.

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