

Food bank moves to larger facility

New warehouse will help Community give more aid to Valley.

By Farin Montañez / The Fresno Bee
03/27/07 03:31:39

The Community Food Bank is upgrading to a larger facility next month to prepare for an increase in food distribution to hungry residents in the Valley, and the food bank needs help from the community to move the stored goods.

The current warehouse does not have adequate truck docks and space needed to hold and distribute the large amount of food that the food bank wants to give out, said CEO Sarah Reyes.

The food bank's board of directors has spent the last six months planning the future of their organization and decided that the growing operation would need a larger distribution center, Reyes said.

The move to the new warehouse at Central Avenue and Highway 99 in Malaga, southeast of Fresno, will begin Monday.

"Hopefully the move will be complete May 1," said Reyes. "But the current warehouse is 50,000 square feet. That's 55 truckloads worth of product that we need to move to the new warehouse."

That comes out to roughly 6 million pounds of food -- a million pounds shy of what the food bank distributes to 46,000 people over a year.

Reyes is asking local businesses to lend forklifts and big rigs. She also would like truck drivers and forklift operators to volunteer their time to complete the move quickly.

The relocation will be a seamless move, Reyes said. All food distribution will continue uninterrupted during the move, she said.

The new warehouse is 1,000 square feet larger than the food bank's current facility on Thorne Avenue near Belmont Avenue. Although it is only slightly larger than the current facility, the new one is better equipped to handle food distribution, Reyes said.

"It has the dock space and dock doors that we'll need to move more product," she said.

With a larger facility, the Community Food Bank will face larger costs.

"It's double our current rent," Reyes said. "But the fact that we'll be moving more product far outweighs that."

The new warehouse was previously used by the Marine Toys for Tots program and by Broder Bros. Co., a distributor of sportswear and accessories, Reyes said.

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