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Rescue mission examines function

*New director hopes to help homeless
make positive decisions about direction*

By Henry Robinson

RELIGION EDITOR

The new executive director of Asheville's Western Carolina Rescue Mission wants his facility to be more than a temporary caretaker for the homeless. The Rev. David Allen Hayes believes the Rescue Mission can bring positive change to the lives of homeless people through a rehabilitation and recovery program.

Hayes, who was born in Asheville and grew up in the Washington, D.C., is no stranger to inner city ministries. "We felt God's call to the inner city ministry a long time ago," he said, adding that his assignment in Asheville is just a part of that calling.

A graduate of the University of Maryland and the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, he formerly served as coordinator of the apartment ministry at

First Baptist Church in Norcross, Ga. Hayes and wife, the former Connie Fletcher, have a daughter.

Hayes said the mission will continue providing beds for overnight guests who come in from the streets and will serve them lunch and dinner. However, the

main thrust of the ministry will be to develop a rehabilitation and recovery program for people who are serious about getting their lives together.

"We want to help the homeless make progress in getting their lives together, rather than allowing them to stay where they're at. We are

putting the program together piece by piece - we are not there yet. It is going to take a lot of work and prayer," Hayes said.

"Everyone is unified around this effort," he said, "the staff and the board of

"We are trying to help men and women who come here to face God and then themselves, the problems they have and the lifestyle issue they are dealing with."

DAVID ALLEN HAYES

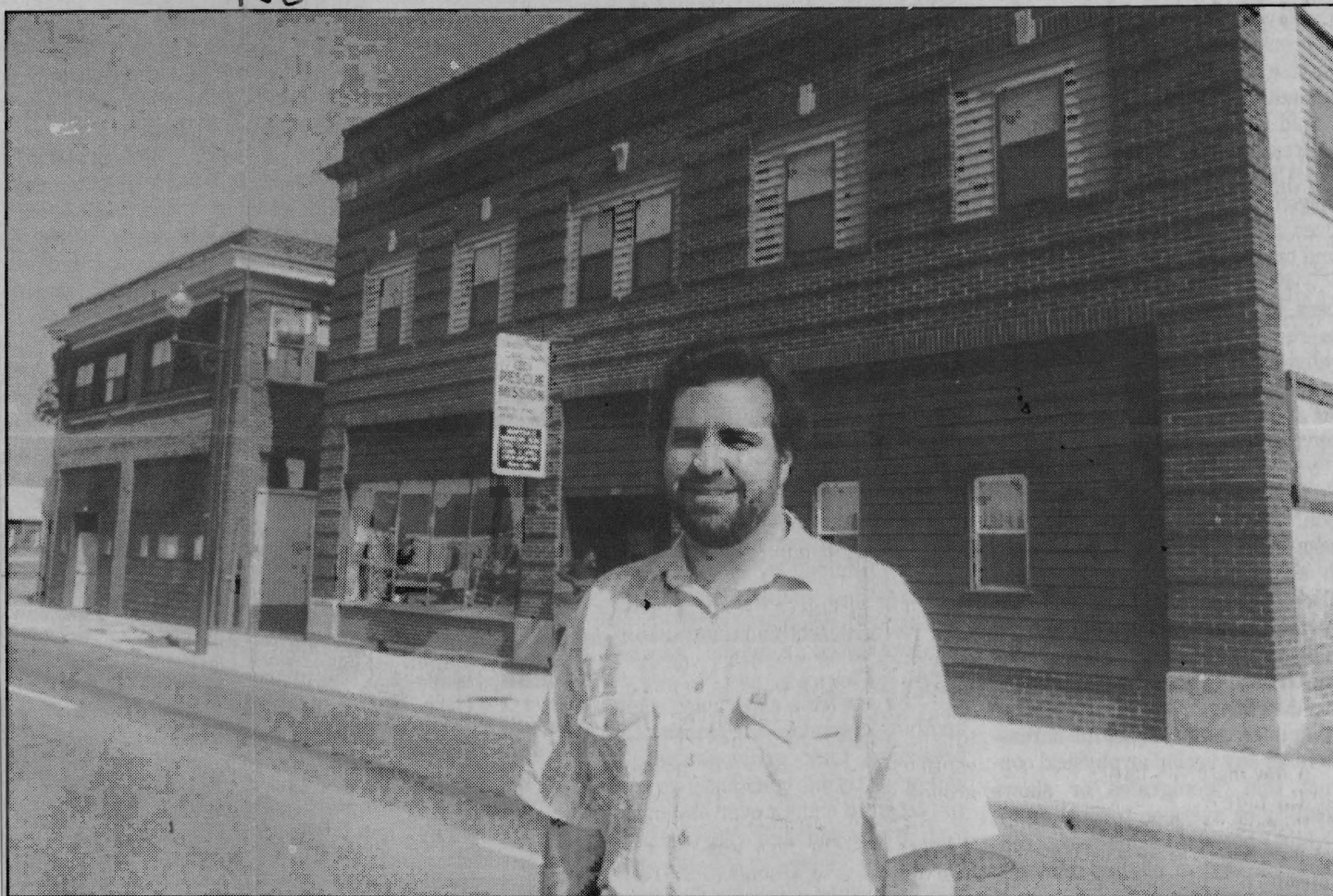
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EWART BALL/CITIZEN-TIMES

The Rev. David Allen Hayes is the new executive director of the Western Carolina Rescue Mission on Patton Avenue where he hopes to bring about positive change in the lives of the homeless.

directors. We've got some pieces in place, now we have to communicate this (the program) to the churches and to those who support us. We think they will be in agreement with us," Hayes said.

"We are trying to help men and women who come here to face God and then

themselves, the problems they have and the lifestyle issue they are dealing with," Hayes said.

"Some will come into the 90-day program, stay for a while and then leave, but most of the people will stay for the duration of the program," he said.

The Rescue Mission, located at 225 Patton Ave., provides shelter for men and women and families.

The mission has a facility to house 30 men, and an additional unit to accommodate five single women and three women with children.