

Disaster Center Could Be Disaster

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in water-saturated areas. During an earthquake, the water-saturated silt or sand changes to liquid and does not support the surface soil.

The soil collapses, they said, and any building on the site may sink, lean or even topple.

In Santa Cruz County the liquefaction area occurs along many of the coastal areas and along major rivers.

With its location next to the San Lorenzo River and a short distance from the ocean, the county disaster center falls into both these classifications.

Notwithstanding the county disaster center dilemma, county supervisors voted to approve the seismic safety element to the general plan.

The plan points out areas of landslides, faults and liquefaction in the county and proposes a number of preventative measures.

For future developments, the plan proposes open space and low-density housing for fault areas, geologic surveys for buildings proposed to be constructed in fault areas, setbacks for buildings from the actual major fault lines, and an update of building codes to reflect earthquake hazards.

For existing structures, the county would start a program of examination and programs to bring the buildings into conformance with earthquake codes, criteria for the examinations would be developed and new disaster preparedness plans would be drawn up.

A public information brochure would also be made up.

The report also recommends hiring a full time geologist to implement the plan.

According to the report, Newell Creek Dam would be in danger of a landslide if an earthquake did occur.

Should a large-scale landslide occur in the lake area, water could break over the dam or the structure could actually break.

"This possibility is obviously of concern since the inundation area of Loch Lomond encompasses the towns of Ben Lomond, Glen Arbor, Brackney, Felton and the City of Santa Cruz" reads the report.

The report suggests permanent lowering of the water level if a problem is found to actually exist.

The plan is a state mandated document and is being incorporated into the area general plan.