

Pros And Cons Of Scotts Valley Incorporation

Incorporation Backers Want To Stay Rural

By Wallace Wood

A city that will pay its own way and follow its own path — probably to remain a rural community for many years — is the goal of incorporation-minded Scotts Valley citizens.

All seven city council candidates, incorporation leaders and some 150 persons, who have proclaimed publicly they will vote for cityhood, agree that is what they want.

And the winds of political opinion seem to say that Tuesday will be their last chance to create a city of Scotts Valley.

In brief, the cityhood boosters claim that the "Gateway to Santa Cruz" can gain these advantages:

1. Local control to keep the area rural residential or aim its development wherever citizens want it to go.
2. Protection from Santa Cruz city annexations and from outside control that could "dump" undesirable businesses, taxes and assessments into the valley.
3. Financial independence without taxes for an indefinite period. State allotments may make possible a small money surplus of \$18,000 next year.
4. Better financing than now available in unincorporated areas. Homeowners would find home financing easier, along with future road and sewer financing, since many companies prefer to back an entire city with its resources.

Since the creation of the Local Agency Formation commission in 1963, proponents say chances of forming a city in future years will grow steadily dimmer.

On paper, the proponents claim the city would end its first year with money in the bank. State allotments from various sources would start trickling in by June, while present county services would continue by law until at least that time.

Money that once went into the

county's treasury would go to city coffers instead. Sales tax revenues, liquor license fees, gas and vehicle tax monies and other allotments would total \$52,000.

Another \$8100 would come from fines, utility company franchises and licenses and permits, making a yearly revenue of more than \$60,000.

The proposed City of Scotts Valley would spend about \$42,000, however, leaving \$18,000 in reserve.

Most city services still would be provided by the county, including police protection by the sheriff's office, use of county courts, jail, library, social welfare, county clerk-recorder, assessor, tax collector-treasurer, civil defense and other offices.

Fire protection would come from the existing Scotts Valley Fire district.

Most other services, such as water, power, garbage collection and postal service, would continue on the present basis.

Under the banner of a general law city, Scotts Valley would have to provide a police chief, a fire chief and a treasurer. Sheriff Doug James, Volunteer Fire Department Chief Carl Taylor and a city-appointed treasurer probably would be named immediately to fill the posts respectively.

One of the prime reasons for proposing cityhood, says incorporation leader L. J. Cardwell is that "supervisors have done a fair job in Scotts Valley, but they simply can't devote the kind of interest and attention to us that we need."

He points out that many of the most vocal opponents have been excluded from the city boundaries by supervisors.

If Scotts Valley does not incorporate, city boosters claim, several unfortunate things could happen:

1. A welter of overlapping assessment and special service districts, costing taxpayers extra money for road improvements, sewers, street lights, sidewalks and other conveniences — without orderly growth.

2. Eventual annexation to Santa Cruz with the city's tax

rate adopted by residents. Even this, some valley citizens claim, would be preferable to unregulated growth.

3. Wild, unruly growth as new citizens, businesses and industries spill over the hill from Santa Clara valley. Without more local control, the valley could do little to "stem the tide."

Cityhood Will Be Expensive, Foes Claim

By Len Klempnauer

The foes of an incorporated Scotts Valley contend that cityhood would mean an increase in taxes for the area, if not immediately, in a very short while.

Led by the Scotts Valley Improvement association, opponents have been campaigning just as vigorously as those who favor a city. The improvement association, dormant, though formed some years ago, suddenly became reactivated to fight the incorporation drive.

When the petition favoring incorporation gained sufficient signatures, the opponents immediately began asking that they be excluded from the proposed city's boundaries. After the county board of supervisors had established the city's limits, a considerable number of the opponents had been omitted. Although they officially have

no "say" in the voting booth Tuesday, they still have actively campaigned against cityhood, along with those left in the boundaries. They see themselves as potential annexation areas in the future.

Charles Maire, improvement association president, states, "That the proposed city can be operated without taxes seems to be a very wistful bit of thinking. Seventy-one incorporated areas in California with a population between 1000 to 3000 have an average tax of \$1.43 per \$100 of assessed valuation with an average budget of \$146,475.

"The proposed budget for Scotts Valley shows an estimated income of \$60,059 with estimated expenditures of \$41,770, leaving a surplus of \$18,289.

"If this be true, it is very likely that Scotts Valley would become a Mecca for every city manager and councilman in the state wanting to find out how this could be done."

Opponents also claim the assessed valuation of the 3.5 square miles proposed for a city is not large enough to support a city.

Says Maire, "If the people of this area want incorporation, then wait until we have a substantial tax base, business and light industry. Then the area can be incorporated without burden to the homeowner."

Proponents have suggested that the city of Santa Cruz intends to annex Scotts Valley in the future. The opponents state Santa Cruz city can't annex Scotts Valley without the people in Scotts Valley voting for the annexation.

Another reason for incorporating the area, according to proponents, is that the Scotts Valley area has little voice in county government. However, Maire counters:

"It has been stressed that we would have better representation with our own councilmen rather than with one supervisor in five representing this area. Anyone who has ever watched politics work must certainly realize that there is always a good bit of back scratching present.

"If we have a good supervisor, the others will go along with him for things that he wants because they will want him to go along with them on things for their districts."

Still another reason for incorporation is "home control" in planning and zoning.

"Proponents say they want to do their own zoning and planning. What zoning or planning they have in mind has not yet been

made public," states Maire.

Maire continues, "Some of these people here (proponents) are convinced that they are going to have substandard roads brought up to standard without cost to them. Some even expect sewers for free. You do not get something for nothing.

"To say that we should incorporate is to keep this area rural is a choice bit of double talk. A rural area is a rural area, not an incorporated city."

He concludes, "Residents of this area who are not property owners should have the moral fortitude to vote 'no' on incorporation and not burden property owners with heavier taxes. Renters should also remember that incorporation will affect them, as landlords will have to increase rentals to offset higher taxes."

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