

Cityhood effort delayed

If Aptos becomes an incorporated city, it won't do so in July as proponents had hoped, but a year later. One of the reasons for the shift in the incorporation target date is that it is taking longer to gather the signatures on the petitions than was anticipated. And even if the Nov. 1 deadline for submitting the petitions to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is met, there is a likelihood that the matter can't move through the LAFCO mills fast enough to make the June ballot. Thus, according to the chief spokesman for the incorporation effort, they are now aiming to make the November ballot a year from now, with an effective incorporation date — if voters approve — of July 1, 1981.

One of the problems in the petition drive, according to Mrs. Glenn Specht, is that they really don't know how many signatures they must gather. The law requires that the petitions calling for an incorporation election contain the names of 25 percent of the registered voters on the date the petitions are turned in to the county. Mrs. Specht says that there has been a surge in voter registration due to the recall elections and other ballot issues, leaving the incorporation committee up in the air as to exactly how many signatures they must gather. Originally, it was believed that 2,500 signatures on the petitions would be sufficient. Now, she says, they will need 3,000 or more. "The petition drive is going well," she said, about 1,000 signatures having been gathered. The exact number is not known "because the petitions are still in the hands of the circulators."

When the incorporation effort was launched, it was hoped to make the June, 1980, ballot with the proposal

calling for incorporation on July 1, 1980, if voters approved. The reason for the July 1 effective date "is that the county will carry the city for one full year after incorporation," Mrs. Specht explained.

But in order to make the June ballot, the petitions would have to be in the hands of the county on Nov. 1 of this year and through the LAFCO hearings by March of next year. Any delay in the LAFCO proceedings could prevent the

matter from making the June ballot even if the signatures were submitted in time, Mrs. Specht said, so it was decided to take a longer time to gather signatures to make sure there were enough to qualify the matter for hearings and an election. "We are not professional petition circulators," Mrs. Specht said. "It is simply a matter of the business people and other community members having enough free time to make contacts."

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