

# Here's how the board divided up the county

By BUD O'BRIEN

The boundary line between the Second and Fourth supervisorial districts in Santa Cruz County underwent a significant geographical change at the hands of the Board of Supervisors last week, but the population shifts were not that dramatic.

In the main, the changes were acceptable to the two supervisors who represent the districts — Robley Levy of the Second and E. Wayne Moore Jr. of the Fourth. Mrs. Levy, in fact, had no complaints at all, but Moore wasn't entirely happy with the fact that he had a bit of the city of Watsonville snipped from his district.

Moore joined his fellow conservative on the board, the First District's Dan Forbus, in voting against the redistricting plan — not because he was particularly opposed to the lines that were drawn around his district, but because, he said, he agreed with Forbus that "community interest" in many cases had been sacrificed to sheer population concerns, and because he felt his district, already the fastest-growing in the county, was overpopulated.

Moore said he believed that a better population balance could have been achieved. He said population projects indicate that his district will grow beyond the limits established in the current redistricting process within a year or two, thus diluting the voice in county govern-

ment of his constituents.

Despite the unhappiness of Forbus and the reservations of Moore with the redistricting proposal, it was considered and approved by the board without a lot of the vitriolic fireworks that often accompany such political realignments.

What frustrated Forbus was the determination of the board majority to follow the recommendations of the planning staff that the realignment be done strictly along the "census tracts" set up by the U.S. Census Bureau when it conducted the 1980 census of the county. Traditionally, such boundary realignments have been done by changing political precincts, or by simply carving up the county in any way that can be politically palatable to the majority of the board.

Dave Laughlin, the county planning staffer who headed the redistricting project, said the staff decided to use the census tract lines — which were drawn without reference to political boundaries — because state law was quite strict in mandating that population was to be the determining factor in establishing political boundaries. He indicated — and the board majority agreed — that deviating from that method could open the county up to a successful legal challenge of its redistricting methods.

In trying to equalize the districts in population, the staff set up a standard that

would not allow any of the five supervisorial districts to deviate from the "ideal" population by more than 3 percent. That "ideal" — which represents the county's total population divided by 5 — is 37,620. What was finally adopted by the board put the Fourth District at about 38,664, or 2.8 percent above the standard, and the Second District at about 37,740 (there was one minor last-minute juggling between the two districts), or three-tenths of a percent above the mean.

The First District's new boundary lines embrace 37,408 people, six-tenths of a percent below the standard; the Third District of Chairman Gary Patton will have 36,644, 2.6 percent below the standard, and Joe Cucchiara's Fifth District will contain 37,685, two-tenths of a percent above the standard.

Despite the rather elaborate insistence of Chairman Patton that the system used in redrawing the lines was, through use of the census tracts, divorced from politics, Forbus thought he spotted the self-interest of the three-person liberal majority clearly delineated by the newly drawn boundaries.

The veteran supervisor recognized that his own district had become even more "safe" for him with its increased conservative tint under the new plan, but he said that didn't fool him. He noted that while this "dumping" of certain conservative areas such as Pasatiempo into his district

might further strengthen his already relatively safe position, it had the simultaneous effect of ridding the liberal Cucchiara of some bothersome conservative constituents.

In fact, most observers agree that, while the realignment of the districts is not likely to bring dramatic political changes, the biggest single beneficiary is Cucchiara, who not only gets rid of conservative Pasatiempo, but also of that part of mostly conservative Scotts Valley east of Highway 17.

Forbus was particularly displeased with having the new line drawn through the middle of what he considers a "community of interest" in the Summit area, giving a portion of it to Cucchiara's Fifth District. Forbus tried to have the district lines in that area remain where they were, but, despite the fact that the shift of the 965 people back into his district would still meet the redistricting standards, the majority refused to go along. Cucchiara and Mrs. Levy agreed with Patton that there should be no changes in the proposed boundaries except along the lines of the federal census tracts, which ruled out the changes desired by Forbus.

Because the census tract lines "cooperated," Moore managed to get a couple of changes in the staff proposal approved for his Fourth District. One of them extends the boundary line down Bowker Road from

Freedom Boulevard to Calabasas Road. In exchange for that, Moore yielded back to the Second District a portion of the foothill area north of Sans Road and west of Green Valley Road.

Otherwise, major changes in the boundary between the two districts remain. In the new alignment, Mrs. Levy's Second District will take in the area between Highway 1 and the bay all the way to the Pajaro River, except for the part of the city of Watsonville that embraces the Beach Road-Lee Road area. That means that the uninhabited part of the city along Harkins Slough Road will be in the Second District, as will Pajaro Dunes. All these areas had been in Moore's Fourth District.

In addition, the Second District will get that part of the Fourth District that takes in Freedom Boulevard and acreage on either side of it to just beyond White Road — a segment known in the county building as "Mello's finger" because it was originally carved out to keep then Supervisor (now State Senator) Henry Mello in the Fourth District.

On the other side of the Second District, that part of the city of Capitola west of 41st Avenue and the Opal Cliffs area will be switched to Forbus' First District.

Moore's Fourth District will be extended northward into the hills to embrace the Casserly-Salsipuedes-Browns Valley area.



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