

Community Meet Tentatively Slated During November

By John Elliott
Sentinel Staff Writer

Robert Swenson, president of Cabrillo college, has been named general chairman of the Santa Cruz Congress for Community Progress. The congress is tentatively set sometime during November.

Those were the main points discussed yesterday during the initial gathering of the congress project committee.

As general chairman, Swenson will preside during the one-day, community-wide gathering, intended to focus attention on five or six major problem areas in Santa Cruz. Suggested methods of solution — determined by discussion panels — will be presented, debated and then finalized.

Tom Ludcke, of San Francisco, community representative for Pacific Gas and Electric company, indicated a major benefit of the congress is the good it can do in directing future growth, as well as the promotion of a harmonious and constructive atmosphere within a community.

Pacific Gas and Electric has sponsored similar programs throughout the state. Ludcke noted that in northern and central California, 11 programs have been completed since the beginning of the year, with another 20 in planning stages.

Unable to attend the meeting was Campbell Armor, chairman of the project committee. Don Fultz, manager of the Greater Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce, announced Swenson's selection by a steering committee.

An informal show of hands indicated all 25 project committee members believe they could attend two meetings per month, rather than the normal monthly meeting. It was decided a firm date will be set during the next meeting, August 16 at noon in Galio's restaurant.

In cities where a second or third congress is now being held, Ludcke said, preparation time has been trimmed, but Santa Cruz would be the first to speed up the initial congress. The project committee will select key issues for the congress, which will be split into morning panel discussion and afternoon mass meeting.



Dr. Robert Swenson

Key issues will be determined largely from response to questionnaires mailed to organizations, clubs, groups, civic committees and any other organized group of individuals. There are more than 450 such groups within Santa Cruz, all of which have been or will be contacted, according to Fultz.

Ludcke noted the project committee will be lucky to receive 300 replies, but even that many "will provide a certain cross section of what people are thinking."

When topics are selected, panels of knowledgeable individuals in each area will be appointed. Panels will be briefed and convene on congress day, coming forth with their recommendations during the afternoon.

During a final, post-congress meeting, accepted recommendations will be studied to determine if they are of an immediate or long range nature.

When the determination is made, said Ludcke, action will be taken to file them with proper authorities, such as the city council or planning commission, along with a request that action be taken within a specified length of time.

During the August 16 meeting of the project committee, in addition to setting a date for the congress, a list of the assets and liabilities of Santa Cruz is to be drawn. Presenting reports will be representatives from five subcommittees — site, questionnaire, publicity, program and attendance — which are now being formed.

Problem areas differ from city to city, but past discussion points have included housing, traffic, planning, rehabilitation, recreation and street repair among others, Ludcke said.

Ludcke said one of 10 Americans now live in California, while by 1975, it will be one of every seven.

"We can't stop progress, shut the people out," he said, "but we can plan on how the growth will be accepted."

He also cited examples of by-products of the congress, including a feeling among elected officials in some cities that they finally have the backing of citizens "and are really starting to do things" as a result. In Santa Rosa, he said, the congress was directly beneficial in passage of capital improvement bond issues that had been drubbed severely in the past.

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