

# New 5th District supervisor wants to 'hit the ground running'

Board of Supervisors

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✓ SANTA CRUZ — Ask Mark Stone what he does for fun these days and his face goes blank for just a second.

No wonder.

During the past week the 46-year-old attorney has been politically catapulted from serving on the Scotts Valley school board to representing the county's 5th District on the Board of Supervisors — without the intervening time between election and service most can-

didates enjoy.

However, Stone sees his appointment to the board by outgoing Gov. Gray Davis as an advantage for a guy who had been mulling a move forward in his political career.

"It would have taken a long time to build a campaign," Stone said, sitting in the meeting room at the Sheriff's Office service center in Felton. "This is an opportunity to hit the ground running and make a success of it."

Big issues face the county: coping with the state budget's ripple effect, the ques-

tion of Highway 1 widening, and, in the 5th District, uproar over ownership of the Felton water system.

But the day-to-day workings of the office are a bit more microcosmic. The supervisor is the face of government for areas that don't have city councils and mayors.

"There are barking dogs and abandoned cars and all that little stuff," Stone said. "That's what it's about, making sure the county provides service to constituents. The unincorporated areas have no other body or voice to go to."

## Getting acquainted

One of Stone's first priorities will be reviewing all the complaints and concerns his office receives.

"I'm going to look at every one of them," Stone said.

But the big item on the plate is the Felton water system, where residents are concerned about the acquisition of Cal-American Water Co. last year by German-based conglomerate RWE.

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**STONE**

Catapulted from school board to supervisor

## Stone

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Stone said he was trying to pick up where predecessor Jeff Almquist left off before Almquist was named a Superior Court judge in August.

The next step will be to examine the viability of forming a special voting district, Stone said, which possibly would be used to vote on bonds to pay for buying the system.

There could be a two-part bond, one to finance the process and legal fees and another to pay for the actual system, Stone said.

As for Highway 1, Stone said he was still assessing the views of 5th District residents.

This week was spent with nearly nonstop meetings with constituents and colleagues. His first board meeting Tuesday touched on everything from health care to development.

Stone is in the process of setting hours for walk-in meetings with constituents. Beginning Dec. 3., he will be at the Sheriff's Office service center in Felton on Wednesdays from 9-10 a.m.

He plans to set times and locations for such meeting in Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek.

## 'Perennial volunteer'

When he's not working, the Scotts Valley resident, who's married with two children, enjoys riding one of his fleet of motorcycles, including a vintage Norton. An

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COUNTY SUPERVISOR MARK STONE

avid jogger and swimmer, he recently took up surfing along with his daughter.

A graduate of UC Berkeley, he earned his law degree from Santa Clara University's School of Law.

He launched his political career in 1998, winning a seat on the Scotts Valley school board, then winning re-election last year.

A self-described "perennial volunteer," he said his foray into public life was an outgrowth of that spirit.

Stone started a local law prac-

tice 10 years ago after teaching contract law and negotiation at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey.

That negotiation experience has involved him in numerous business deals, especially in the high-tech industry. That work has included some high profile deals: Stone was involved in the early 1990s deal that resulted in a business alliance of Apple Computer, IBM and Motorola.

Years of negotiation expertise should be valuable in the new job,

he said.

"I think that is a skill I bring, understanding the process of bringing people and ideas together to find solutions," he said.

As for his political future, that hinges on next year. While navigating the learning curve of being a supervisor, Stone will have to spend some time in campaign mode to keep the job. The appointment runs through next year, but elections await in a little more than four months.

Five others have taken out papers to qualify to run for the 5th District seat in March (Stone plans a formal campaign announcement later this week). If none of them wins a majority then, a runoff would be held in November.

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