

Hospital fund campaign garners over \$1.6 million

A flurry of donations earlier this week, including a \$30,000 contribution by Wells Fargo Bank, has put Watsonville Community Hospital over the top in its campaign to raise \$1.5 million toward a \$16 million expansion of the hospital. The goal was reached and exceeded in just four months, making this one of the most successful fund-raising efforts in Pajaro Valley history.

Phil Rather, chairman of the Next Step Capital Fund Campaign, said that as of Wednesday, a total of \$1,606,879 had been raised in the community by the team of 178 volunteer workers. The total will go even higher, Rather said, because "a number of contributions are still pending, and others have indicated they wanted to support the hospital, but could not do so until later this year or in 1983."

The hospital was required to raise the \$1.5 million to qualify

for a state mortgage loan that would allow the expansion program to proceed. That it was accomplished in so short a time was a tribute, Rather said, not only to the hard work of the volunteers, but to the community itself. "This is a success the entire community can be proud of."

The hospital, Rather said, "has a strong support base in the community. The people know we have a good hospital and that we need to expand it to meet the growing needs of the community."

"The message came through very clearly," he said, "that people believe we have a good hospital and a highly professional staff."

As evidence of the broad support base, Rather pointed to the \$850,750 contributed by individuals, businesses and organizations in the community. Donations ranged in size from a few dollars to \$30,000 contributions by Wells Fargo, the Pillsbury Foundation in the name of the Green Giant company, and the S. Martinelli Co.

The Charles Ford Co. set the tone for the campaign with its early contribution of \$25,000, which was matched by several other firms.

The hospital staff and employees also supported the fund drive in a major way, with the doctors and dentists contributing \$476,000,

the hospital employees \$154,729, and the Hospital Service League a \$125,000 pledge.

The 178 volunteers — including committee members and hospital employees — who worked on the campaign will be feted at a victory celebration Friday at the Kennedy Youth Center.

With the goal reached and exceeded and the loan assured, the expansion of the hospital will get under way immediately. Construction crews from Lathrop Construction, of Emeryville, are already on the job, surveying the grounds. Heavy machinery will begin excavation sometime next week.

The project was originally planned to be completed in phases over a period of 36 months, but plans are now to do it in one phase with completion expected in 26 months, according to architects Stone, Marracini and Patterson, of San Francisco.

The project includes the completion of the hospital's fourth floor, with the addition of 25 beds and location of intensive care, pulmonary and coronary care units there; expanded maternity facilities, including an alternative birth center and expanded nursery, labor and delivery facilities; expanded emergency care, laboratory and radiology facilities; and construction of two auxiliary buildings to house administration, classrooms and storage.