

Local Operators Vote For Closing

BY WALLACE WOOD
Sentinel Staff Writer

If you haven't gassed up your car or camper by the time you read this, you had better get going.

Most service stations in Santa Cruz and the Monterey Bay - San Francisco Bay areas are planning to close this weekend in protest against the federal Phase 4 price rollbacks.

The gas "strike" was agreed to by more than half the Santa

Cruz County service station operators Thursday night, and the remaining operators were being asked to join the shutdown today. Many will close by 5 or 6 p.m.

Representatives of more than 3,000 service stations, most from Northern California and the bay areas, voted in Oakland at the same time to close down the weekend, including Monday.

Starting Tuesday, the operators said in Oakland they

would open only from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the time most persons are at work.

Panicky motorists jammed many service stations in the San Francisco Bay area, and Santa Cruz area service stations also were extremely busy. Lines were forming at pumps early in the day at open stations.

"We want to close it down this weekend from the northern redwood country to south of Monterey," said Ken Davis, president of the newly-formed California Service Station Operators Assn.

"If a motorist has to walk 10 miles to get a gallon of gas, that's tough. Where was he when I was running 10 miles an hour, on my feet all day, losing money? You can bet he wasn't writing to his congressman then, but maybe he will now," Davis told a crowd of nearly 60 service station operators in Santa Cruz Thursday night. There are 84 service station operators in the county.

Some independent service stations are expected to remain open for at least part of the weekend, but may run out of gas because of the heavy demand.

Gas is rationed to dealers by almost all the major oil companies, and once a dealer has used up his allocation, "that's it; he's out of gas until his time comes up to get some more," said Bob DiCiano of Bob's Chevron Service in Santa Cruz. DiCiano and Joe Calcagno of Plaza Shell on 41st Avenue acted as spokesmen at Thursday's operators meeting.

"This will be the first time in my history I've closed," said Calcagno. "But something has to be done."

Under Phase 4, dealers have been ordered by the Nixon Administration to roll back gas prices to the same level of Jan 10 of this year.

But dealers have been caught in a squeeze of price hikes on the wholesale cost of gasoline. Three companies have just announced price increases to dealers.

"If you don't think you're being sold out by the oil companies, you're crazy," Davis told local dealers. "If you don't believe the government sits down with the oil companies and plans these things out, you don't believe in Watergate."

Reprisals against dealers by the major oil companies are expected, Davis said. Most have leases requiring them to remain open. "That's why it's time to form an association of all dealers. We are going to go over every lease with an attorney."

Davis also said there are ways to bypass the lease requirements. "They say you have to remain open; they don't say you have to sell gas," one station operator observed.

But Davis advised dealers to close their doors. "I don't want to be there when some deer hunter comes by and finds out you won't sell him gas. He's likely to just go get his gun." He predicted customers may "beat on the doors and spit on the windows" if they can't get gas.

But in the long run, Davis said the public would come to sym-

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Watsonville Bus Service Planned

By BILL NEUBAUER
Sentinel Staff Writer

Annexation of the City of Watsonville and the Freedom, Interlaken and Pinto Lake areas was initiated this morning by directors of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District.

District directors adopted unanimously a resolution asking the Local Agency Formation Commission to approve the annexation "to offer transit service to the residents of the City of Watsonville" and the adjacent unincorporated areas.

According to Director Ernest Wicklund, a final conference last Monday with Watsonville Mayor Bill Johnston and his city council drew strong support for incorporation of the area into the transit district.

Wicklund stressed, however, that part of the package was to include bus service to and from Santa Cruz and Watsonville, and that this service was to be provided for the same single fare the district traditionally levies for a ride anywhere within its service area.

Were the present fare schedule adhered to, a ride to Watsonville via bus would cost a dime on weekends.

The resolution set into motion a series of events expected to get the annexation accomplished by around the first of 1974.

The procedures include not only approval by LAFC but obtaining letters of approval

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pathize with the plight of the service station operator. "He knows you're trying to stand up for your rights."

A promise by the federal Cost of Living Council Director John Dunlop in Washington, D.C. Thursday that gas retailers would be allowed to raise prices slightly was called "just throwing us a bone to keep us quiet" by Davis. "They are not going to let us raise them much unless we really make a stink."

Davis said the new association wants all controls removed. "This has been a very competitive business, and open competition has worked best."

It has been so competitive that most service station operators are fiercely independent and against any unionization, DiCiano observed. "This is the first time I have ever seen all the dealers trying to get together."

The Santa Cruz meeting ended with spontaneous offers by service station operators to close the weekend, though they had not heard of the formal vote in Oakland Thursday night.

Dealer after dealer jumped to his feet, and to general applause announced he would close over the weekend. "Hank Barnes Chevron will close." "Gary Bobbit's Union is closing"; "Fred Pfyffer Shell won't be open;" "Bibbin's Mobil won't, either." they said.

The group plans to meet again Monday night to see if they will agree on standard operating hours, along the lines of the 8:30 to 4:30 hours in effect now in San Jose.

"This may revolutionize the service station industry," said Davis.

Encouraging Outlook For UC

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The chancellor of the University of California's Berkeley campus told UC regents today that the outlook there was educationally encouraging but fiscally disturbing.

Albert H. Bowker, in a state of the campus report, said "Berkeley's continuing strong drawing power" is reflected in a 10 per cent increase in students seeking admission as well as the lowest rate of tenured faculty resignations in more than a decade.

In addition, Bowker said campus policy that students "shall be asked to evaluate the teaching of their professors" has worked effectively. "Each case presented for promotion of a professor must include evidence that his teaching has been evaluated by his students," he said.