

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Cucchiara chairman of board

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SANTA CRUZ — The torch was passed Tuesday — if not exactly to a different generation, at least to a different gender. Outgoing Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Robley Levy turned over the gavel to San Lorenzo Valley-Scotts Valley Supervisor Joe Cucchiara.

Pajaro Valley Supervisor Sherry Mehl became the board's vice chairwoman, replacing Live Oak Supervisor Dan Forbus.

Forbus briefly protested Cucchiara's selection, saying that keeping the vice chair position warm for the board's two conservative members — Mehl and Forbus — amounts to "tokenism."

Levy gave a year-end report, in which she said that the dominating 1987 issues remained the same as in previous years: land-use; the fiscal condition of county government; and the county's need to deliver services to a growing population, especially in the mid-county area.

The board has considered three volatile land-use issues in Levy's tenure as chairman, which is the title she prefers. She said that in each case — the Wingspread Beach development, the Seascape Benchlands project and the Polo Grounds purchase for parkland by the county — the density has been reduced and the public has received benefits from board actions.

She said the board has a continuing commitment to preserving prime agricultural lands from housing subdivisions and annexation by cities, and to reducing growth.

Levy said the county took "significant strides" in 1987 toward providing services for urban areas in the unincorporated area, including Live Oak, Soquel and Aptos. Critics have complained that the board has dumped housing in mid-county areas while not providing services.

In 1987, she said, the county finally concluded its recovery from major dam-



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Supervisor Robley Levy passes the symbol of leadership to new board Chairman Joe Cucchiara.

age caused by rain storms that have plagued it in during the decade.

She deflected another frequent criticism aimed at the board — namely, that it has not dealt with worsening traffic problems. Levy said that the County Public Works Department began a "major effort" to improve roads and traffic in the county, as well as pedestrian safety.

She also noted the numerous fiscal problems faced by the county, including the loss of the last federal revenue-sharing funds in 1987, but said that despite the loss, the county continues to provide needed services to "the most needy in our

community — our senior citizens and children."

Levy touched upon the sheriff's-fee controversy, noting that the attempt to raise revenue by taxing county property owners for increased sheriff's patrols was soundly defeated at the polls in 1987.

The sheriff's patrols' issue will remain hot in 1988, she predicted, and said that in other Northern California counties, such as San Mateo and Santa Clara, "the debate is not how to expand Sheriff's patrols, but how deeply to cut them."

The criminal justice system is a

condition, said Levy, adding that it got a "lion's share" of the discretionary tax dollar in 1987.

After Levy spoke, she was praised by Supervisor Gary Patton, a frequent foe in most of the major land-use battles of the past two years. Patton said Levy had given an "able, fair and equitable" performance as chairman.

Cucchiara said that 1988 will be a "year of decision in several key areas," including a hazardous waste policy, providing services to match urban growth and deciding on a future course for the county's economy.