

City of Aptos? — it may not be a bed of roses

By BOB SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Aptos, if it incorporated as an independent city, would be a city the size of Watsonville.

But its problems, its resources, its goals might be far different than Watsonville or any other city in Santa Cruz County, Aptos Chamber of Commerce members were told Thursday morning by Steve Burrell, the Capitola City Manager.

"County government is structurally not able to

handle the problems of an urban area," Burrell told the chamber. "Yet you are an urban area; you have the need for services provided at the local level.

"But if you are considering incorporation," Burrell added, "the most important factor is the community's intent — you have to have the reasons, the goals."

Chamber president John Hibble said one motivation might be better or, at least locally responsive, planning.

"Aptos is the same size as Watsonville (in terms of pop-

ulation) and Watsonville is readily identifiable as a city. Aptos is not because it considered by many to be a rural area," Hibble said.

"And yet, the county planning department considers the benchlands from Santa Cruz to Aptos to be an urban area, but it also admits it is not able to cope with this area because it is an urban area," Hibble added.

The Aptos Chamber will co-sponsor a forum tomorrow evening in Cabrillo College's Room 450 to discuss "Local Self-Government Alternatives"

for the various unincorporated areas of the county.

Dr. Linda Martin, one of the acknowledged experts on incorporation in California in the wake of Prop. 13, will be the principal speaker.

Other sponsors include the Cabrillo College Community Education Department, Aptos Neighbors, Live Oak Community Assn., Rolling Green Estates Improvement Assn., San Lorenzo Valley Chamber of Commerce and the San Lorenzo Valley Property Owners Assn.

Burrell, who has been Capitola's chief executive officer for the last seven years, was invited to present a rough analysis of Aptos's financial resources and ability to deliver services if it did incorporate.

Using the U.S. Census Bureau's figures of 25,000 population for the Aptos area, Burrell said, puts Aptos on a par with Watsonville when the state begins to divide up the tax monies it collects for cities throughout California.

But if you use, instead, the County's figures for the Aptos

and Aptos Hills planning areas, there were 18,000 people living in the Aptos area in 1980 and projections are for 31,000 people by the year 2000.

Much of a city's revenue comes from state-collected taxes distributed to cities on the basis of population.

Sources include motor vehicle in-lieu, cigarette and liquor taxes, and the gasoline taxes.