

Supervisor Beautz bids farewell to public life

Board of Supervisors
Live Oak resident leaving board after 20 years
as the neighborhood's most vocal advocate

By KURTIS ALEXANDER
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When county Supervisor Jan Beautz takes her seat alongside her four board colleagues this morning, it will be for the last time.

After five successful runs for office and 20 years running county affairs — building budgets and shaping road projects and housing developments — the popular 62-year-old Live Oak resident is retiring from public life.

However, the issues she's made a career of advocating for, notably helping modernize her once scruffy and cash-pinched home district, still loom, she says. And she doesn't plan to let those go by the wayside.

"I will not hesitate to say if I have disagreements," Beautz said Monday amid stacks of office paperwork she's sorting in anticipation of the move. "I still live in the district."

See **BEAUTZ** on **PAGE A14**



12-16-08
Retiring Supervisor Jan Beautz first won election in 1988, and since then has consistently sought to modernize and improve the Live Oak area.

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Sentinel

Beautz

Continued from Page A1

Beautz, who did not support her soon-to-be replacement John Leopold in the November election to replace her, says keeping money and public services flowing into the Live Oak area should remain the district's priority.

"As money gets tight, there will be a push to use money for other things, but the district needs to keep what's due," she said. "This is why I ran in the first place."

The beginnings of Beautz's campaign for District 1 supervisor, in 1988, can be traced to a small neighborhood group, the Live Oak Community Association. Amid the increasingly rocky tenure of her predecessor, Dan Forbus, neighbors had begun to organize against what

Jan Beautz

AGE: 62.

HOME: Live Oak.

JOB: County supervisor, attorney by trade.

FAMILY: Married with three children, three grandchildren.

they saw as a county leadership not working in their interests.

Private developers were eyeing a 17th Avenue plot where residents wanted a park — it would later become the county-run Simpkins Family Swim Center — Beautz remembers, while developer fees from Live Oak were going toward parks in Aptos and the San Lorenzo Valley.

On a promise to bring more money and respect to Live Oak, Beautz easily defeated Forbus.

"Jan did a good job of keeping things in scale ... and focusing

on the neighborhood, municipal issues of her district," said former Supervisor Gary Patton, who served with Beautz when she first joined the board.

Beautz's other board colleagues, as well as her constituents, point to the basic infrastructure Beautz helped establish — from sidewalks to parks to a new library and swim center. While other areas of the county may have taken such things for granted, Live Oak, which receives no city services and has no elected city council, lacked many of the basics.

The county Redevelopment Agency, which channels property taxes to underdeveloped communities, became the means to fund improvements. Beautz's push to keep the Skyview Drive-In from becoming an agency-funded auto mall during her first year in office established her as a force in directing the

agency's large sums of cash.

"She's fought very hard to make sure the 1st District is well-represented," said Leopold, who officially takes over for Beautz on Jan. 5. Leopold says he intends to continue Beautz's legacy of making sure the area gets adequate attention.

In addition to Live Oak, the district includes Soquel, Branciforte and a swath of the Santa Cruz Mountains from Highway 17 to Nisene Marks including the Summit.

Beautz says her plans for next year are still up in the air, but she expects to return, at least part time, to her earlier work as an attorney.

She'll miss politics, she says, but she's ready to move on.

"Twenty years is a long time," she said.

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