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State blamed for county's budget woes

By LANE WALLACE
STAFF WRITER

A neglectful state government is mainly to blame for Santa Cruz County's budget problems, the county's top executive told supervisors this morning.

Santa Cruz County must make "substantial reductions in local programs and services" because the state has ignored growing financial problems for the last 10 years, County Administrative Officer Susan Mauriello said in a letter to county supervisors.

Mauriello was scheduled to present budget figures for the 1992-93 fiscal year today, but delayed that report until next Tuesday.

The state, which doles out a large portion of county government budgets, has tried a "succession of piecemeal solutions" to budget problems which haven't worked, Mauriello said.

The state, Mauriello said, faces problems in funding for medical care, welfare reform, worker-compensation reform, courts and other issues.

If the problems aren't resolved, she said, the ability of local governments to deliver services will be hampered and college costs would exceed what most people can afford.

Mauriello said she doesn't expect changes in Sacramento. "Following the budget process in Sacramento makes one accustomed to the unbelievable, and I am not optimistic that Sacramento has the will to address the accumulation of problems destroying the quality of life in California."