

City Employees City lacking minority workers

By MARTHA MENDOZA

Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Kathleen "Kitty" Hansen and Ingrid Bailey are the only women fighting fires in Santa Cruz, Darryl Jones is the only black person working in the Planning Department, and the city's own personnel department has no Hispanic employees.

"We don't look as good on the paper as we seem to consider ourselves," said Affirmative Action Committee Chairwoman Sharon Yamanaka.

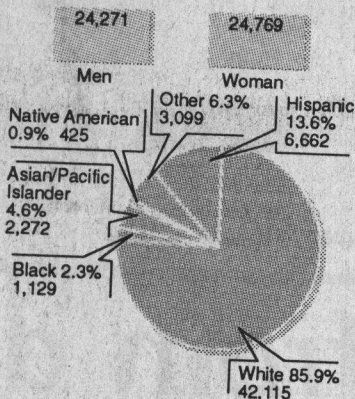
This summer the city's Affirmative Action Committee released an annual report showing slight progress in the hiring and promotion of women and minorities, but the city's work force still does not come close to reflecting Santa Cruz's population.

"I think the city has made progress, but I wouldn't characterize it as strong progress," said Councilwoman Jane Yokoyama, an Affirmative Action advocate.

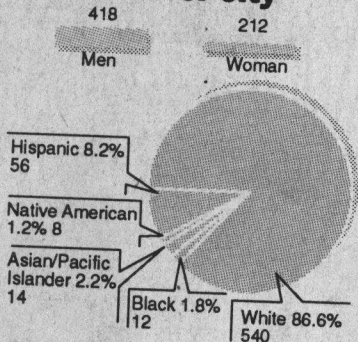
Yokoyama said she is bothered that women and minorities are not making it into the final selections for fire department jobs, and that the police department has hired no Hispanic officers recently.

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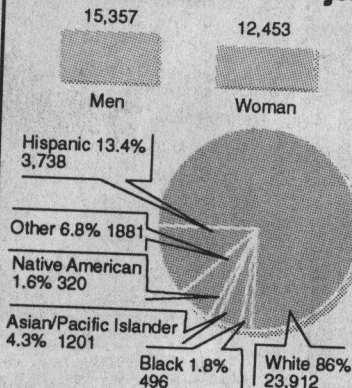
Santa Cruz City population



Work for city



Residents over 16 with jobs



City work force

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According to 1990 U.S. Census figures, Hispanics make up 13.6 percent of Santa Cruz's population and 13.4 percent of the working residents, yet only 8.1 percent of the city's employees.

"I'm particularly concerned in law enforcement that we have people who match the people they serve, so they can be role models, and also provide instant identification for community members who may want to approach them," Yokoyama said.

According to the report, it will take up to 15 years to achieve parity in the entire city workforce, despite the Personnel Department's efforts to bring about change.

Despite the long wait, there were

signs of improvement in the fiscal year beginning July 1990. Fifteen of the 24 Police Department's hiring opportunities were filled with affirmative action candidates, and all five of the people hired into the Planning Department were women or minorities.

Personnel Affirmative Action liaison Jeanne Jones says the hardest part is recruiting women and minorities to apply for jobs.

"They're in demand," she said. "There's competition from other jurisdictions, and people can pretty much choose where they go."

Personnel staff members regularly attend local high school and college job fairs, and participate in career days. Additional outreach has been done in the city's Hispanic neighborhoods, and there has

been specific outreach to attract women in the trades.

Classes on cultural diversity and basic Spanish are held for city employees, and courses in sexual harassment are planned for all city employees in the coming year.

Yokoyama, who has offered to help recruit potential employees, says she sees institutional racism in the city, which is only now beginning to change.

"We need to do more work, and it needs to be very aggressive," she said.

Yamanaka leads the city's Affirmative Action Committee, which advises the City Council. She also works for at Branciforte Library, and was one of the first women of color to work in that system.

Yamanaka says many committee

members are frustrated by the slow wheels of change, and she pointed out that one woman who recently had applied at the fire department quit midway through the hiring process because "she didn't feel real comfortable."

"You have this lip service, they say they want you, but then there are all these subtle messages," she said.

Yamanaka said Santa Cruz's progressive reputation is becoming a fallacy.

"I don't know where they base that on because I don't feel like it's really progressive," she said.

She pointed out that the Water Department, which hired six white men and one Asian woman between July 1, 1990, and June 30, 1991, is particularly lacking. There

were 26 white male and 12 women and minority candidates for those positions, according to the report.

Water Department Director Bill Kocher concedes there are problems with affirmative action hiring. But he says many of the positions for which he recruits require specific training, and there are

fewer qualified women and minority candidates.

"You can have the desire to make the affirmative action hire, but you must have the candidate who can do the job," he said.

Kocher says he will continue to do his best to hire women and minorities.