

In the Aptos spotlight



Chip Scheuer

Robley Levy reacts to announcement as Assemblyman Sam Farr (right) and Jim Fairbanks applaud.

Man and woman of year: Tim Cleary, Robley Levy

By NANCY BARR

STAFF WRITER

Burying the utility lines in Aptos Village was the highlight of the past year for the Aptos Chamber of Commerce.

That was evident last night as the chamber gave its awards for man, woman and organization of the year to the those who were most responsible for getting rid of unsightly utility poles in the Village.

American Savings manager Tim Cleary, who spearheaded the effort, was named Man of the Year. Santa Cruz County Supervisor Robley Levy was named Woman of the Year for helping to make the project possible.

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. was named the Organization of the Year, also for its part in moving the utility lines underground. Accepting the award for PG&E were John Fisher, recently retired gas and electric operations manager and newly installed Aptos Chamber president, and his replacement at PG&E, Charles Betuccelli.

At the chamber's annual dinner, held at Aptos Seascap, chamber director Julie Parsons credited Cleary with coming up with the idea of removing the utility poles.

Said Cleary, "When I first came here in 1978, I saw these ugly wires outside ..."

"... a forest," said Levy, finishing Cleary's thought.

Cleary said he vowed to do what he could to remove the poles and wires if he had the opportunity. The opportunity eventually came in the form of money that the Public Utilities Commission required PG&E to set aside specifically for moving wires underground. When some of that money was made available to Santa Cruz County, Levy helped to steer it to the Aptos Village project.

"It took a community leader to make this idea a reality," Parsons said of Levy.

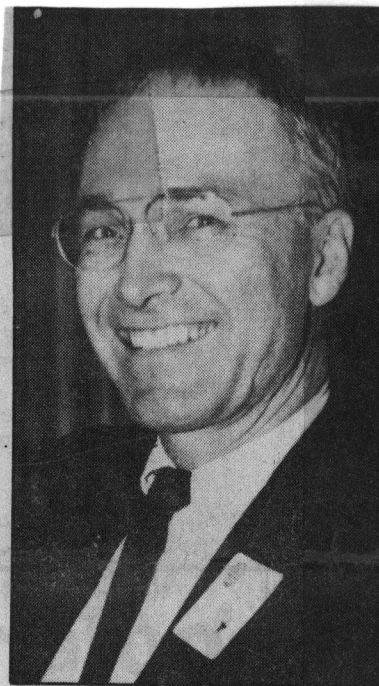
Levy said Cleary was the real force behind the undergrounding project, and Cleary, in turn, shared the credit with all the Aptos Vil-

lage property owners, who agreed to go along with the project.

The approximately \$1.2 million paid for the removal of all poles along Soquel Drive from State Park Drive to Trout Gulch Road. The last of the poles was removed in February of this year.

A second phase of the project is now under way, in which the poles are being removed back from Soquel Drive to the area around the post office. Levy and Cleary said they hope that funding will become available to extend the undergrounding project all the way up Soquel Drive to Cabrillo College.

Cleary and Levy both said their awards last night came as a complete surprise. Levy said she probably should have realized something was up when she came to the chamber's annual dinner with a proclamation honoring the Man of the Year, and nothing for the Woman of the Year. But in the course of her busy schedule, she said, she just didn't give it much thought.



TIM CLEARY
He was pleased

In addition to the giving out of awards, the chamber dinner last night served as a celebration of the chamber's 60th anniversary. As part of the celebration, the 150 guests were treated to a presentation of historical vignettes about Aptos prepared by Cabrillo College history instructor Sandy Lydon and produced by KRUZ-TV.