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# Cucchiara won't run

## Surprise decision means race is wide open

By KATHARINE BALL  
STAFF WRITER

Two-term Santa Cruz County Supervisor Joe Cucchiara startled all but his family and closest friends when he announced yesterday afternoon that he will not seek re-election to his San Lorenzo-Scotts Valley seat.

Cucchiara, 40, who has reportedly suffered ill health

for the last two years, said he had made up his mind only within the past two days not to run.

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Fred Keeley, a former aide to Cucchiara and now chief of staff for Assemblyman Sam

Farr, took out papers late yesterday afternoon to run for Cucchiara's seat.

Keeley, 38, said he would spend this weekend "testing the waters" in the 5th District to see if he had support "wide enough and deep enough" to run.

Cucchiara, who has been closely aligned with Gary Patton in his nearly eight years

on the board, indicated he would endorse a candidate who had not yet announced at the time of Cucchiara's 1:30 p.m. withdrawal speech yesterday.

Cucchiara said that with his withdrawal, he was sure there were candidates from the 5th District who would now come forward. Fifteen minutes after he completed his speech, the



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**Supervisor Joe Cucchiara calls it quits.**

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county building was buzzing with the rumor that Keeley would be his choice as a successor.

Outside chances were given to three women whom Cucchiara singled out for praise in his speech. They are Nancy Macy, who founded the Valley Women's Club; Mary Hammer, long active in environmental causes in the county and a former county planning commissioner; and Annette Marcum, an activist for the disabled.

Cucchiara said he would not endorse any of the current candidates for his seat at this time.

District 5 residents have until Wednesday to file for candidacy because of Cucchiara's withdrawal. The deadline in districts 1 and 2, where incumbents Dan Forbus and Robley Levy are running for re-election, was yesterday at 5 p.m.

Cucchiara, formerly an architect, said he did not know what he would do when his term expires in January.

"There may be opportunities in business, foundations, or non-profit organizations. I have nothing particular in mind," he said.

He did not rule out running for public office again sometime in the future.

"The decision not to run was extremely difficult for both myself and my family," Cucchiara said. "I like the work I do. Because I was not feeling burnout, (it) made the decision harder."

In a long lead-up to his dramatic announcement, Cucchiara reviewed the tumultuous times of the Board of Supervisors in the late 1970s, when he first began to consider running.

He reminisced about the controversial recall of two supervisors in 1978.

"From Chicago to Los Angeles, the charades of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors brought national attention to never-ending board bickering, endless favors for developers and increasing hostility towards the poor," Cucchiara said.

Into this turmoil he launched himself as a slow-growth candidate late in 1979, 13 months before his election as supervisor in 1980.

Cucchiara said he had strongly considered whether he should run for his second term in 1984, deciding to go for it because so many capital improvement projects remained to be completed in the wake of the 1982-83 storms, floods and mudslides.

He said he was proud of helping to accomplish the restoration of the Felton covered bridge, the construction of the Boulder Creek branch library, the \$1.2 million acquisition of Quail Hollow Ranch for a park, and the imminent improvements slated for Highway 9, Graham Hill Road, and Mount Hermon Road.

He also said he was proud that he had helped slow growth overall in Santa Cruz County.