

# La Selva, Salsipuedes go against the tide

For the most part, Santa Cruz County voters said no, no and no to ballot measures in Tuesday's election.

But voters in two small fire districts — La Selva Beach and Salsipuedes — went against the tide and approved special taxes for their fire departments.

More reflective of the general mood was the resounding refusal of Freedom Fire District voters to approve a similar tax for their district. In that election, the tax didn't even receive a majority vote, whereas it would have required two-thirds approval to be approved.

Most other ballot measures throughout the county also were defeated, including Measure A, the storm-damage tax.

In the city of Santa Cruz, a rent control referendum, Measure B, went down to a crushing defeat — 10,036 votes to 7,873 — in what was expected to be a close one. A growth management initiative in Scotts Valley was also defeated.

Bill Griffin, chief of the Freedom Fire Department, said this morning about the defeat of the tax measure that would have supplemented his agency's budget: "We've had the support of three generations of Freedom residents for this fire department and we assumed, falsely as it turned out, we still had their support.

"We didn't threaten to cut back services as some other fire districts did; we tried to appeal to voters on an intellectual level, and it didn't work," Griffin said. "We're heroes when we go out on a medical aid call and some member of a family isn't breathing and we revive them with CPR, or someone's locked themselves out of their car, but maybe people forgot these services in the voting booth."

Just over 47 percent of the voters favored the measure. A two-thirds yes vote was needed to pass it.

Griffin said he and the fire district board will take a few days to look over the district's financial situation and then decide where to economize. The department's present budget is \$216,000 per year, with \$90,000 of that property tax revenue and the rest coming from state funds.

Salsipuedes Fire Chief Ron Hart was breathing easier this morning after the residents of his district passed the measure to tax themselves to continue the present level of fire and emergency services.

"They showed by their vote they

wanted us and we'll do the best we can for them," Hart said.

The Salsipuedes vote was close, with fewer than 70 per cent of the voters agreeing to the tax. As with all tax measures on the ballot since Proposition 13 passed, a two-thirds majority was necessary.

Al Kinslow, chief of the La Selva Beach Fire Department, was both weary and irritated this morning, although pleased the tax measure to support his department passed by the widest margin in any fire district locally. Slightly over 76 per cent of La Selva Beach voters approved the extra taxes for emergency services.

Kinslow was irked at the county elections department, which failed to send sample ballots to many La Selva Beach voters. The ballots would have informed them that their polling place, which has always been in La Selva Beach and in recent years at the Community Clubhouse on Estrella Avenue, had been changed to Monterey Bay Academy on San Andreas Road, necessitating a drive of about four miles for some.

Kinslow and a fire commissioner, Don Green, took to the streets of the tiny beach community Tuesday afternoon with a loudspeaker to tell voters to check with the elections department to make sure of the correct polling place:

"I'm especially grateful to voters who traveled all the way to Monterey Bay Academy to vote. There was plenty of room at the clubhouse for all La Selva precincts to have used that facility," Kinslow said this morning.

The chief said the revenue generated by passage of the tax measure in his district would enable the department to continue to provide emergency services at the present level.

"With Proposition 13 and the end of 'bailout' money from the state, we really need this money to operate our department in the manner La Selva residents have come to rely on," he said.