

# New group hopes to broaden base of environmentalism

By LARAMIE TREVINO

STAFF WRITER

A group of Santa Cruz-based environmentalists have formed an organization they hope will bring together people who view environmental issues from different perspectives.

The founders of the organization, known as Green City, realize there's plenty of room for disagreement among community residents over environmental issues that affect people's lives.

That's why they want all kinds of people to join with them in working for the long-term social, ecological and economic health of the community.

"One of the surprising things in bringing together people of differing political persuasions is that a common vision emerges," said Jeff Reingold, a Green City organizer.

Established two years ago, Green City is comprised of representatives from local government and community-based organizations as well as individuals committed to improving the quality of their

environment.

As part of the Plastics Alternatives Coalition, the group has been active in proposing a county-wide ban on Styrofoam.

While sipping juice from a recyclable paper cup, Reingold and fellow organizer Reggie Knox ticked off the number of ways Green City has attempted to improve the inner-city environment.

There've been workshops on housing and cooperative UC-Santa Cruz planning strategies. In addition to the Styrofoam project, Green City is involved with local rail transportation research and education for a sustainable (organic) system of agriculture.

"Sustainability" is a major buzzword used by the group in its approach not just to agriculture but also politics.

"Sustainability is looking at things through a long-term view," Reingold explained.

It also involves examination of root causes.

Reingold noted Green City's approach is not just to oppose issues, but also to provide options, or "ecologically sound

alternatives."

Earlier this month, Green City and the Central Coast Pesticide Coalition sponsored a sustainable-agriculture forum.

Knox, a North Coast organic grower, said more than 100 people participated in the event.

He said Green City members want to expand to the South County to tackle labor and agriculture issues, particularly pesticide uses.

"Farmworkers are most immediately affected by pesticides," Knox said.

At Knox's Santa Cruz home, a visitor can spot evidence of energy and environmental options.

Bicycles, a compost pile, an organic garden and clotheslines are among them.

Green City leaders are compiling a handbook that defines its commitment to a sustainable community.

Santa Cruz Green City program organizers got the inspiration for their organization from a similar program in San Francisco.