

# Santa Cruz area: high-rent district

## Local rents top state median by \$100

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SANTA CRUZ — News flash: It costs a lot to rent a place to live in Santa Cruz County.

It should come as a surprise to very few that Santa Cruz County housing rents are nearly \$100 a month higher than the state median, according to recently released figures from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The state median is \$561; in Santa Cruz County, median rent is \$651, which means that half the rentals in the county fall above that figure, half below. Rents in the city of Santa Cruz also posted a median of \$651.

Rio del Mar is the most expensive place to rent in the county, with a \$898-a-month median; Freedom, at \$457 per month, is the cheapest.

Median monthly rents elsewhere in the state include \$564 in San Diego County, \$606 in Santa Barbara County and \$715 in Santa Clara County.

The county's median rents top the state figure despite a recent indications of a "softening" of the local rental market, said Mary James, director of the county Housing Authority.

"There was a slight drop in rents last year," said James. "We tracked them from September (of 1990) to January (1991) and they had gone down a little bit."

"In a soft market, rents will always go down a little bit."

James was unsure why the traditionally tight county rental market has loosened. "I don't know the reasons," she said.

The census housing statistics measure rent for all "housing

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units"; the bureau defines housing units as "a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms or a single room that is occupied as separate living quarters."

The census also measured the average number of people per family, and the average number of people living in rented, and owned, homes.

Interlaken, the South County community near the County Fairgrounds and Pinto, College, and Kelly lakes, had the highest number of people per family at 4.12. Interlaken also has the most "persons per unit," at 3.87 (owned) and 4.31 (rented).

Interlaken's high occupancy numbers reflect a large number of renters in the area, said Steve Matarazzo, principle planner for the county Planning Department.

"High income families tend to have less children, and they would also tend to be owners and not renters," he said.

The Opal Cliffs area has the fewest people per family in the county, with 2.72, followed by Capitola (2.73) and Rio Del Mar (2.74).

## By the numbers

### Highest median home value

Day Valley	\$350,600
Aptos Hills/ Larkin Valley	\$337,900
Rio del Mar	\$321,900
Scotts Valley	\$303,100
Corralitos	\$291,700

### Lowest median home value

Freedom	\$185,200
Watsonville	\$185,000
Boulder Creek	\$195,900
Interlaken	\$203,600
Felton	\$213,000

### Highest percentage of homes over \$500,000

Day Valley	19.4 %
Aptos Hills/ Larkin Valley	18.6 %
Twin Lakes	14.1 %
Rio del Mar	11.6 %
Corralitos	11.5 %

### Lowest percentage of homes over \$500,000

Watsonville	0.42 %
Boulder Creek	1.01 %
Felton	1.11 %
Freedom	1.28 %
Ben Lomond	1.65 %

### Most people per family

Interlaken	4.12
Freedom	4.01
Watsonville	3.71
Day Valley	3.23
Ben Lomond	3.18

### Fewest people per family

Opal Cliffs	2.72
Capitola	2.73
Rio del Mar	2.74
Aptos	2.80
Twin Lakes	2.89

### Highest median rent

Rio del Mar	\$898
Scotts Valley	\$813
Soquel	\$746
Aptos	\$727
Capitola	\$720

### Lowest median rent

Freedom	\$457
Corralitos	\$541
Watsonville	\$557
Interlaken	\$567
Aptos Hills/Larkin Vly	\$607