

# County exports fare well

Economics

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Export sales from Santa Cruz County rank in the top third of metro areas in the United States in 1994, according to a Commerce Department study released Thursday. Despite its relatively small population base and geographic size, the county's merchandise export sales totaled nearly \$857.5 million, putting the county 85th among 256 metro areas surveyed.

County Economic Development Coordinator Susan Pearlman said Thursday she is not aware of any locally collected figures on county exports. But, Pearlman speculated that agriculture and manufactured goods make up a large share of the total.

"It's strawberries going to Canada," Pearlman said, adding that she has been told the market for strawberries in Mexico has crashed. She also said exports probably include hard disks and other computer hardware from Seagate and software.

Silicon Valley showed one of the biggest gains in export sales in 1994 compared to 1993 sales.

California had total exports of \$92 billion in 1995, \$78.2 billion in 1994, with computers and electronic equipment pacing the sales. California was the top exporting state for

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both years.

Ceil Cirillo, redevelopment director for the city of Santa Cruz, said the local figures "reflect how our economy is diversifying and growing. It represents the technology industry exporting a lot of our products from here. A Silicon Systems, or a SCO or a Seagate ... even Lipton exports their teas."

Tony Livoti, head of the Monterey Bay International Trade Association, said that in addition to computer hardware and software firms and Pajaro Valley agriculture, local exports include "California lifestyle products: surfboards, surfwear, skateboards" along with health and organic foods.

According to the survey, Detroit, New York, Los Angeles and Seattle are America's

export champions, but Biloxi, Miss., and Dubuque, Iowa, are tops in recent gains.

The Commerce Department said Thursday that 80 percent of the metropolitan areas it surveyed showed export gains in 1994, with total sales of products from those areas totaling \$415 billion, an 11.5 percent increase from 1993.

"One cannot overstate the importance of exports in creating jobs and economic growth in cities throughout the country," Commerce Undersecretary Stuart Eizenstat said Thursday at a news briefing.

The report found that 77 cities posted gains in export sales of \$1 billion or more in 1994. The biggest increase was in Detroit, which gained \$10.69 billion over the 1993 level.

Other big dollar gains were recorded by San Jose, Calif., up \$3.77 billion; Chicago, up \$2.89 billion; Los Angeles-Long Beach, up \$2.21 billion; and Richmond-Petersburg, Va., with an increase of \$1.25 billion.

The report said the biggest percentage increases in exports were turned in by a number of smaller cities, led by the Biloxi, Gulfport and Pascagoula metropolitan statistical area in Mississippi, with an increase of 160.4 percent.

While the Biloxi area ranked first in per-

centage growth in exports, it was ranked only 145th in terms of total exports, with \$281.6 million in 1994 sales.

Detroit, which enjoyed the biggest dollar gain in export sales in 1994, also ranked as the city with the largest total sales at \$27.47 billion, an increase of 63.7 percent over 1993.

It was followed by New York with 1994 sales of \$23.54 billion, a 16.5 percent drop from 1993, blamed on a decline in sales of gold bullion shipments by financial institutions and metals dealers.

The third-largest metropolitan area in terms of exports was Los Angeles-Long Beach, with 1994 sales of \$22.22 billion, an 11 percent increase from 1993, followed by Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, Wash., at \$21.75 billion, down 8.7 percent, and San Jose at \$19.94 billion, up 23.3 percent.

The report on exports marked the first time the Commerce Department has tried to break down the benefits from overseas sales by metropolitan area.

The department, whose export promotion activities have come under attack from Republican budget cutters, said the report should prove useful for state, local and private-sector organizations in developing export strategies.