

# Cable co-op joins forces with Boston company

By BUD O'BRIEN

A Santa Cruz-based cooperative announced another major step this week toward its goal of winning the franchise to provide cable television service to the city and county of Santa Cruz.

Cable Cooperative of Greater Santa Cruz said it had signed an agreement this week with Nashoba Communications Co. of Boston under which the Boston firm will supervise the replacement of the existing TV cable system and manage the commercial component of that system if the cooperative wins the cable TV franchise.

The cooperative was formed by local residents earlier this year with the aim of bidding for the cable franchise now held by Group W Cable. The agreement with Nashoba, said Co-op president Edward F. Newman, provides the co-op with the

expertise needed to be a serious competitor for the franchise.

Group W Cable, however, has already indicated it will fight any award of the franchise to another company. Group W's position is that it has a right under the law to renew the franchises it now holds with the city and county.

But the city and county have scoffed at that claim and have called for bids on the franchise, which expires next year, from other companies, including cooperatives. Those bids are due Dec. 31.

Newman said that Nashoba's credentials as a cable TV firm are "very strong." He said the company developed a bid for another co-op for the franchise in Cambridge, Mass., is franchised to operate cable television systems in six Massachusetts cities and towns, and has franchise appli-

cations pending in six other cities.

In addition, he said, Nashoba's construction subsidiary has built the systems that the corporation operates, "and those systems have received high praise for quality and dependability of service."

Whoever wins the Santa Cruz franchise will have to rebuild the cable system entirely into a state-of-the-art system with a capability for at least 60 channels.

"Nashoba is a young, active company," said Newman. "We feel they're exactly the right partner for us in development here of subscriber-owned cable television."

He said Nashoba will send some of its corporate staff to Santa Cruz to work with Co-op consultants Carol Glover and Steve Turner in preparing the bid proposal.