

# County ranks among most educated

Education

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NEAL COONERTY,  
BOOKSHOP OWNER

By **KURTIS ALEXANDER**  
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SANTA CRUZ — Call it foolish pride or arrogance. But Santa Cruz residents have long suspected they're a bit more intellectually advanced than most.

Now they may have evidence to prove it.

A report released Wednesday by the U.S. Census Bureau ranks Santa Cruz County as the fourth most-educated county in the West, and 16th in the nation.

"That was part of our attraction to

the area," said bookseller Neil Coonerty, whose Bookshop Santa Cruz opened just after UC Santa Cruz arrived in 1965 and remains known for its eclectic selection of books. "People here respect learning."

The census report, which counted residents 25 and older with graduate or professional degrees, found 16.9 percent of county residents hold degrees beyond the bachelor's level.

Topping the list were Montgomery County, Md., with 29.2 percent, and Fairfax County, Va., with 28.1 percent holding advanced degrees — both in

the Washington, D.C.-metro area.

Also in the top 10 most-educated counties were suburban counties of New York City and Boston as well as Boulder County, Colo., home to the University of Colorado, and Washtenaw County, Mich., home to the University of Michigan.

Mike Rotkin, Santa Cruz city councilman and lecturer at UCSC, said Santa Cruz ranks high both because of the university and proximity to the San Francisco Bay Area.

"The growth in this county has really come from students that decide to

stay in the area, faculty at the university and Cabrillo College as well as the people looking for jobs in Silicon Valley," Rotkin said.

Santa Clara County edged out Santa Cruz County in the percent of residents with advanced degrees by a half-point. San Francisco was the only other California county more educated than Santa Cruz.

Only counties with more than 250,000 residents were included in the survey.

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