

Housing plan goes to vote

Scotts Valley - 1990

■ **Scotts Valley:** Debate about open space leads to referendum over 145-home project.

BY TERRI MORGAN
Special to the Mercury News

The fate of a hotly contested 145-home development planned on former dairy lands at the northern end of Scotts Valley is now in the hands of voters.

A citizens' group called "Save Scotts Valley" successfully petitioned to get the project put

to a public vote in a special election on June 8. The city council in November approved plans by the Keenan Land Company to build homes on 45 acres within a 200-acre site off Glenwood Drive.

In setting a date for the special election, which will cost the city about \$24,000, the council rejected the referendum's request to

rescind its approval.

The Glenwood project has elicited fierce debate in Scotts Valley, where some residents are still upset that the school district is building a high school on an adjacent parcel. Critics argue that the overall impact of both projects is more than the area can bear. They say developing the site would change the city's rural character, displace wildlife and adversely impact traffic and city services.

Supporters say the project will pay for traffic and infrastructure improvements through-

out the city, fund recreational amenities and retain 150 acres as open space. Representatives from the local business community and about two dozen Scotts Valley residents formed a group called "Yes on Glenwood" last fall to lobby for its approval.

Recognizing emotions run high on both sides of the issue, Councilwoman Sheryl Ainsworth on Wednesday urged supporters and opponents to keep their campaigns civil during the four months leading up to the election.

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"I'm asking both sides to remember we're all community, and will have to live together for a long time after this is done," she said.

Mayor Randy Johnson said he anticipates a good, healthy debate. Representatives from the development firm and Save Scotts Valley

said educating the voters would be the key to victory.

"We feel confident once people have heard the arguments that they will vote against the project," said Jeff Ringold, project coordinator for Save Scotts Valley. "Anyway you cut it, this project is urban sprawl, and we don't believe that's what Scotts Valley wants for its last open space."

Kerry Williams, project manager for the Palo Alto-based Keenan Land Co., said the development has been carefully planned and will provide numerous benefits for the city.

"The project guarantees that 70 percent of the site will remain permanent open space while providing housing, important traffic and water infrastructure upgrades, police services and parks and recreational

amenities," Williams said.

She hopes to educate voters about the project, which was subject to three years of scrutiny by city staff members and officials.

"The council and commissioners know that this is not a single-issue project that can be captured on a bumper sticker," Williams said. "This project and its merits deserve the attention of the voters."