

Scotts Valley sewer chief heads for Watsonville plant

By KATHY KREIGER

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SCOTTS VALLEY — The head of the city's sewer division is leaving for a little more money and a lot more sewage as head of Watsonville's sewer division.

Wastewater division manager Bob Geyer said the move will be "like going home." Watsonville's sewage treatment plant, he said, is the twin of the one where he got his start at age 15.

"It's the next step up the career ladder," he said.

The Watsonville plant is much larger than Scotts Valley's, processing some 12 million gallons of sewage daily — 14 times the 840,000 gallons a day in Scotts Valley.

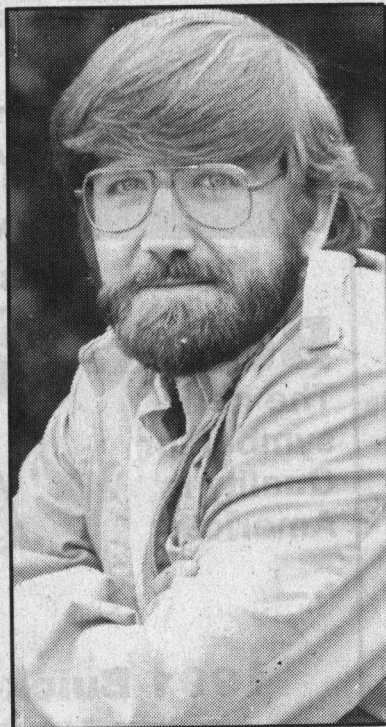
Watsonville is also reorganizing its sewer division. It will now have three separate divisions: water, wastewater and solid waste. Geyer will head the wastewater division.

He said the reorganization will give him a chance to shape his department from the bottom up.

Now paid \$50,000 in Scotts Valley, Geyer's new salary will be \$58,000, he said, "plus a few nice fringes."

He said he'll continue to live in Scotts Valley and plans to use the commute time to listen to Spanish language tapes.

Geyer was praised by the City Council Wednesday — his last day at Scotts Valley — for the work he's done in his seven years with the city. Especially noted were his



Bob Geyer

Will direct wastewater division

active promotion of environmentally sound projects.

Geyer set up and ran the city's hazardous waste program from 1985 until it was turned over to the city's fire department last year.

He was also responsible for starting the city's curbside recycling

program a year ago.

The program now collects an average of 55 tons per month of glass, newspaper, aluminum and plastic bottles before it goes to the dump, Geyer said. Previously, the city sent 210 tons of material to the dump each month but recycling has lowered that to 180 tons.

His proudest moments came, however, when the city's sewer plant was named "treatment plant of the year" for the Monterey Bay area for 1988 and 1989 by the California Water Pollution Control Association.

"We were the most efficiently operated treatment plant for those two years," he said.

There are a few projects that will bring him back to Scotts Valley, he said, including a major revision of the city's sewer ordinances that is still in the works.

For more than half of his 34 years, Geyer has been cheerfully taking care of what most of us would rather forget.

The appeal, said Geyer, is "working to preserve the environment, doing something to make a difference."

Acting Public Works Director Ken said the city has two operators, Paul Reith and Scott Hamby, who are qualified to run the treatment plant until Geyer is replaced.

The recruitment process for Geyer's \$50,000 job will be delayed until after the new city manager, Chuck Comstock, comes on board at the end of the month.