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Population Increase In Aptos Area Boosts Sewage Problem

A swelling population in the Aptos area will augment the present problem of consistently overflowing septic tanks.

This was the observation recently made by Building Inspector Russell Scott, Sanitarian Karl Biehler and Supervisor Lewis Nelson. Relief will be supplied by the installation of a sewer system, they believe.

Approximately 1450 voters will have an opportunity to go to the polls Tuesday and decide the fate of a \$650,000 sewer bond issue. The general obligation measure must have a two-thirds favorable vote to pass.

No signs of organized opposition have been reported. The board of directors of the Seacliff Improvement association, formerly neutral, has passed a resolution favoring passage of the measure. Not taking a stand, but working hard to get information to the people is the Rio del Mar Improvement association.

The most critical area is the flat section of Rio del Mar where approximately 400 persons are serviced from a 700-gallon septic tank. On the already overloaded tank are 91 houses, the Aptos Beach inn, a laundromat and a bar, according to Nelson.

More trouble is ahead for the area since a 43-unit motel is being constructed on Hainline road near the Esplanade. Scott foresees a critical situation when the motel unit is hooked onto the crowded 7000-gallon septic tank.

Biehler explained that the septic tank disposal problem increases each year since seepage is prevented in the ground due to being further sealed off by an increasing number of detergents and greases.

"The soil can take only so

much," the sanitarian explained. "You cannot force water into the ground, and when the sumps and drain fields are sealed off because of effluent from septic tanks there is a real problem."

Other causes for tank overflow come from new washing machines and other household appliances that consume a good deal of water, according to Biehler.

The entire Rio del Mar-Aptos-Seacliff sector is not in a problem category, but there are quite a number of trouble spots, the sanitarian reported.

The number of community leaders who have endorsed the bond issue include Alvin Wendt, president of the Seacliff Improvement association; Harry Rasmussen, association director and past treasurer; Fred Toney of Aptos, and Arnold Borreson of Rio del Mar.

The feeling seems to be high among these leaders that a sewer system is inevitable and it will be cheaper to install the system now than in later years.

Toney emphasized that he firmly believes the system is "a necessity" and the question of cost is not of primary importance.

Jack Dollinger, Rio del Mar, past president of the Greater Santa Cruz Realty board, said a sewer system will usher in increased land values and boost the desirability of property.

"The cost to the property owners will more than come back to them through increased value of property," he stated.

James McKenzie, head of the Rio del Mar association, complained that the public information phase of the program is not being handled properly and only some 5 per cent of the population is familiar with the facts. He believes the election is being "rushed."

There has been a poor turnout of residents for the information meetings sponsored by the association, McKenzie reported. Once approximately 600 notices were sent to residents and only 25 persons showed up, the president explained.

Engineer Robert Stockman, Wilsey and Ham engineering firm; County Counsel Ray Scott, representatives of the Hanauer bond company and various county officials were speakers at the meetings.

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