

Car show wants to motor south

Watsonville may host event

By JAMIE MARKS
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WATSONVILLE — South County may be cruising to the tunes of '50s nostalgia next year if, as it appears, a popular Santa Cruz car show and parade motors to the Watsonville area.

Monday, the day after the end of this year's Beach Street Revival in Santa Cruz, officials with the Watsonville Police Department, Santa Cruz County fairgrounds and Watsonville Chamber of Commerce said they have held discussions with the event's promoter about moving to south county.

Informal talks with promoter Rick Petersen have taken place over the past two years, but no final plans have been presented yet, the officials said.

The annual car show and parade that draws thousands of onlookers and participants has been held in Santa Cruz since its inception in 1978. It also has been a major headache for police, who have tried to deal with the crowds.

Petersen confirmed Monday he wants to move the car show to Watsonville and the Santa Cruz County fairgrounds next year.

"We reluctantly will leave the city of Santa Cruz," Petersen said. "We have many friends there ... but we have to go."

Upset chiefly by the hefty fees charged by the city of Santa Cruz, Petersen is hoping to hold the Beach Street Revival at the fairgrounds the second weekend in October 1990, with a cruise down Watsonville's Beach Street on Saturday night.

Although Watsonville doesn't have a beach — and its Beach Street cuts through the industrial section of town — Petersen said he didn't think moving the event would change the revival's ambience.

"It will be better. It will be self-contained at the fairgrounds, and we can provide our own entertainment on the stage," Petersen said. "One thing that's real positive is that there's better parking and better facilities for the people who haul their cars to the show."

"It's a great stage. We can do more '50s and '60s entertainment. We may even put something together on the race track," he said.

Yvette Jordan, the fairgrounds' business assistant, said Petersen began talking about moving his event "when (former fair manager) Gil Mello was here." That was two years ago.

Jordan said Petersen has been work-

ing out the details of next year's Beach Street Revival with Fair Manager Ron Haedicke, who was out of town Monday.

The fairgrounds charges a rental fee for use of the facilities, but Jordan said she didn't know what those charges would be for next year. Also, she said, the fair board of directors can negotiate a separate fee for an event such as the Beach Street Revival.

Police Chief Terry Medina said his department's discussions with Petersen have been "extremely informal. We really didn't discuss fees and charges. All that will come if, in fact, he decides to come down and lay out his endeavor."

Chamber Executive Director Charlene Shaffer said the chamber and Petersen have worked together on two events, and each has gone well.

"Watsonville's an appropriate environment for the revival because we're the hub city for the Central Coast," Shaffer said. "We can attract people from North County, Monterey, Gilroy, Hollister and San Benito counties."

A major drawback to having the revival in South County is the lack of motel rooms. But Petersen said he could place people throughout the county, as well as Salinas and Monterey.

"We have to put people up in Los Gatos, as it is," he said.

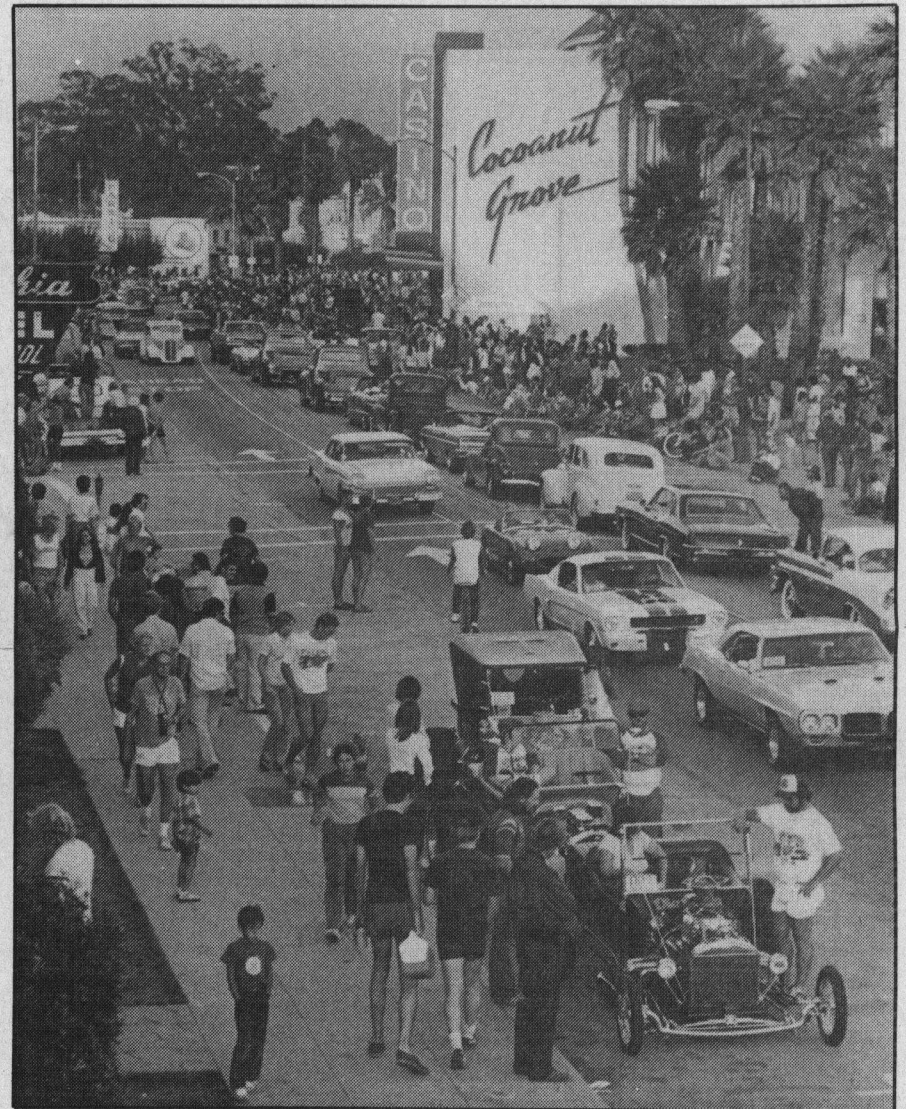
Petersen said his desire to move the annual car and '50s nostalgia event, which he said brought in \$300,000 over the weekend, was a result of the negative attitude of the administration at Santa Cruz City Hall.

"Everything's a negative with this community," he said. "We had a great event. It's California's premier nostalgia event. We're going to go to Watsonville and have a great time."

Santa Cruz Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt said, "The problem has been this is a business and it needs to pay its own way. We go through this all the time, whether it's the O'Neill surf classic or the Beach Street Revival. It would not be appropriate for these events to be subsidized (by city residents)."

Petersen was particularly upset that he was audited by Santa Cruz officials. "They had people auditing the event because they didn't trust our figures. They watched every individual who paid, even though we had numbered tickets and hand stamps," he said.

He placed the number of paid admissions at about 6,000 on Saturday and 4,000 Sunday.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel file

Revival could move from Santa Cruz's Beach Street to Watsonville's.

Assistant City Manager Laura Brown said, "The city had people auditing the event to ensure the proper accounting. It's a normal auditing procedure for an event this size."

Brown said the city wanted to be sure it was getting its full share of taxes. The city gets 5 percent of the price of admission through the entertainment tax, and 10 percent of the revival's gross revenue for use of San Lorenzo Park, where the car show was held.

The main cost to the city is in security, Brown said. Petersen was charged \$9,000 for the cost of hiring extra police and Highway Patrol officers to maintain peace in the beach and Boardwalk areas of the city.

The actual cost to the city was \$14,000,

but the City Council voted in July to waive \$5,000 of the cost, she said.

"This event, without question, has a greater law-enforcement impact on the city than any other event or holiday all year," Brown said. "The beach area goes nuts, and a couple of times it has gotten out of control."

Brown likened the revival's impact on Santa Cruz to the spring break's effect on Palm Springs.

She said police cited or arrested 233 people over the weekend in the beach area, and 39 of those were custody arrests on Saturday night alone.

Petersen maintains that the people causing the problems are not the ones who attend the revival.