

Morning daily makes debut in Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz has its first new daily newspaper since the turn of the century.

The Morning Star was delivered this Monday to 1,800 paid subscribers and placed in 132 newsstands as well as in stores throughout the county, according to Jim Heth, editor and publisher of the new daily.

Actually, Heth points out, the paper is the Morning Star edition of the Peoples Press, a newspaper he says he started 10 years ago as the Buy and Sell Press. Heth, his wife, Katie, and his son, Jeff, own 100 per cent of Santa Cruz Media, Inc., which owns the new paper.

Monday's first edition of the Morning Star, a full-sized paper, had 24 pages. Stories are included by the seven local reporters, the United Press International and the Washington Post-Los Angeles Times feature syndicate. The top story of the day was a report on the appearance in Santa Cruz Sunday of former Texas Governor John Connally.

The Morning Star goes into direct competition with the Santa Cruz Sentinel, which has been in operation for 120 years. Gordon Sinclair, managing editor of the Sentinel, says the Morning Star "is a pretty good paper for their first whack at it."

Santa Cruz has had two other daily newspapers. The Surf, a weekly started in 1883, went daily in 1910 and folded nine years later. The Evening News was in operation from 1907 to 1942.

Heth says 5,000 copies of the Morning Star were printed for Monday's edition. The printing is done in Fremont, with copy prepared for the printer in Santa Cruz. Heth and his staff now operate out of a tiny office across the street from the Sentinel but plan to move soon to a new building on Water St., near the county courthouse.

The Morning Star was two hours late for its first day on the streets. Heth says the folding device on the press broke down in the middle of the night at the Fremont print shop.

Sinclair, whose paper has a circulation of

about 25,000, says he doubts that the Morning Star will be a success.

"I don't know of any city this size which is large enough to support two dailies," he says. "I think you need a couple of hundred thousand people and a hell of a market to support two daily newspapers. But I am impressed with the first day's paper; 24 pages is a pretty good-size start."

Heth says that while the newspaper is completely-owned by himself, his wife and his son — who is also managing editor — he raised \$1.5 million to back his efforts. Some, he says, came from profits from the Peoples Press while he raised the rest from family sources back East.

Heth started an ill-fated daily paper three years ago in Santa Cruz. It went under within 10 days. Heth says, however, that that was not a serious effort and was "in the nature of an experiment to see what the problems are with running a daily. We found out and the Morning Star is the culmination of all we've learned."

The editor and publisher of the Morning Star says he does not plan to aim at a different readership than does the Sentinel. He just plans to get news to readers a half-day earlier.

"I hope we'll be able to put out a newspaper the reader will feel is a better product," he says. "My philosophy is that a newspaper should write for everybody. The Democrats, for instance, are mad at us because we're not their mouthpiece. So are the Republicans and the young, hip crowd and the established old guard."

Heth says the deadline for copy in his paper is 3 p.m. for submitted articles, 8 p.m. for reporters and 11 p.m. for sports news. This means, he says, readers will have the results of night sports events in the morning.

"You have to earn readership in this business," Heth says. "You can't force someone to read your newspaper. And let me tell you something: in our history we've never put an issue on the street we haven't made a profit on."