

EVENT

Santa Cruz celebrates its 219th birthday with a party

History

By NADIA DRAKE

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For the first time in years, the city of Santa Cruz — which turns 219 this month — will celebrate its birthday with a party.

Everyone is invited, no RSVP required. Party favors include sweet treats and booty-shaking jams.

The birthday bash will be Saturday at the Loudon Nelson Community Center, complete with bands, dancing, and sing-alongs.

Transition Santa Cruz, a group dedicated to facilitating living post-fossil fuels, is hosting the celebration.

Michael Levy, Transition's coordinator, says he resurrected the birthday tradition this year because he wanted to honor the city of Santa Cruz.

"We take pride in the place we live," he said. "Santa Cruz is one of the most beautiful places in the world, with a wonderful community."

The city's birthday celebrations in the past included a fireworks show, the last

IF YOU GO
SANTA CRUZ'S
BIRTHDAY PARTY

WITH: Extra Large, Al Frisby, Heather Houston, Gail Swain
WHEN: Saturday, 7 p.m.
WHERE: Loudon Nelson Community Center, 301 Center St., Santa Cruz
COST: \$15 general; \$10 youth under 16, seniors and students
DETAILS: transitionsc.org

of which was held in 2004. Instead of pyrotechnics, this year's event will include singer-songwriters Al Frisby, Heather Houston and Gail Swain celebrating the Santa Cruz community through song, followed by dancing to the beats of six-time "Best of Santa Cruz" winner Extra Large.

Levy hopes to provide a fantastic evening for revelers while also drawing awareness to the goals of Transition Santa Cruz.

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"We want to have a really good time, and inspire people," he said.

The group focuses on educating community members about transition issues like peak oil and climate change, and also helps people develop skills that are likely to be useful in an age of alternative energy sources.

"We are optimistic about the future," Levy said.

Similar transition groups are active in San Lorenzo Valley, Silicon Valley and Los Angeles, as well as in countries like Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

Perhaps unintentionally in stride with Transition's concerns about climate change is a carbon-friendly alternative to cake and candles. While Levy laments the anticipated absence of cake — the group missed several bakers' deadlines for donated cakes — he says not to worry: instead of attempting to blow out 219 carbon-producing, smoke-alarm-activating candles, the city of Santa Cruz will instead wish on birthday cookies.