

# County's exports grow 30 percent

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CALIFORNIA exports of manufactured goods totaled \$77.5 billion in the first three quarters of 1996, some \$23 billion more than Texas, the second largest exporting state. California exports have grown a steady 10.5 percent, or \$7.4 billion during the first nine months of 1996.

The export boom has also thundered into Santa Cruz County, which showed a nearly 30 percent gain in 1994.

Gov. Pete Wilson says that state exports directly and indirectly supported 1.8 million jobs in 1995, a year when the state's exports totaled \$92 billion, up from \$78 billion in 1994.

Wilson said export growth has been fueled by industrial machinery and computer equipment, the state's second largest export category at \$20.9 billion during the first nine months. The largest category is electronics and electrical equipment, at \$22.3 billion through the first three quarters of 1996.

Agricultural exports from California represent 15 percent of the total U.S. ag exports; California alone is the sixth biggest agricultural exporter in the world, ahead of China, Brazil and Australia.

Wilson is leading an export development mission to Southeast Asia that began Jan. 11 and will end Jan. 31. He will visit Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, China and Singapore.

NAFTA appears to have helped the state's export position, as exports to Mexico and Canada increased by 22.3 percent and 17.4 percent respectively in the third quarter. Exports to the two countries represent nearly 19 percent of the state's total.

Exports to Japan, Korea and other Asian nations continue to grow, while exports from California to mainland China increased by 55 percent in the first nine months of 1996 compared to 1995, according to the California Trade and Commerce Agency.

The expanding global market for goods produced in California includes Santa Cruz County exports as well. Exports from the county were up 29.1 percent in 1994 over 1993, according to figures released last June by the U.S. Commerce

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Department. The county's export totals of nearly \$857.5 million in 1994 put it in the upper third of metropolitan areas in the U.S. that year.

The federal survey did not break down exports by specific products, but county officials said at the time that agriculture, specifically strawberries, and manufactured goods would make up a large share of the total.

Monterey Bay International Trade Association Executive Director Tony Livoti says that computer hardware and software, along with California lifestyle products such as surfboards and surfwear, health aids, organic foods and Pajaro Valley agriculture make up the county's exports.

And Santa Cruz County sits next to the fastest expanding export region in the U.S.: Silicon Valley.

In 1995, Santa Clara County exports increased 35 percent to nearly \$27 billion, up \$6.9 billion from the previous year, the largest increase in the country. Santa Clara County ranks behind only Detroit and New York in the U.S.

According to a 1993 U.S. Census report and data compiled by MBITA, Santa Cruz County, with 6,492 firms in all business sectors, has 1,071 firms either exporting products or with the potential to do so. The top five export categories for the county according to the report: computer software and services, processed foods, industrial and farm machinery, electronic equipment and components, and lumber and wood products.

A strong export market is not a new phenomenon for Santa Cruz County. Back in 1960, products as varied as local redwood timber to begonia bulbs were cited as important sellers in markets outside the U.S. Other products in that era with Santa Cruz labels (some of which are still around): Wrigley's chewing gum (here for another year or so, with the plant due to close), frozen fruits and vegetables, canned pears, orchids, black walnut giftware, brooms, fertilizer, cement from Davenport, leather from the Salz tannery on River Street, mushroom compost, and chicken brooders.