

Cops' endorsement of homes criticized

✓ *Scotts Valley - 1990*
Developer pledged contribution

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SCOTTS VALLEY — The Glenwood Meadow housing project has received a glowing endorsement from the Scotts Valley police union, which hopes that \$340,000 pledged by the developer will be used for police services, equipment and future police salaries.

The endorsement mailer, financed by the project developer, Keenan Land Co., was sent to Scotts Valley residents in preparation for the June 8 referendum on the 145-home project.

Glenwood opponents criticized the mailer this week.

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"I'm not sure it is ethical for the Scotts Valley Police Association to take a donation from someone," said Nick Van Bruggen, a leader of the Glenwood opposition. "Right on the envelope, it says American Dream/Glenwood in Palo Alto." The opposition also disputes the financial benefits.

"I think if your organization has an opinion on any issue, you should pay for the mailer yourself," said former police union leader Steve Smith, now an inspector for the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office. "This was clearly paid for by (Keenan Land Co.)"

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Endorse

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The police association has never before endorsed a development or political issue, said the union's current president, Scotts Valley police detective William Adams. He defended the decision to let the developer pay for the mailing.

"Our association is, of course, not a money-making organization," Adams said. "Any money we take in through dues, we try to get right back to the community. The fact that we didn't pay for this (mailer) just gives us that much more opportunity to serve the community."

"I don't think there is anything sinister or wrong in that," said Scotts Valley Mayor Randy Johnson, referring to Glenwood

financing the mailer. "The important issue is the message these police officers unanimously tried to convey."

If Scotts Valley voters OK the project, the city's police force stands to benefit in several ways. Developer Chop Keenan previously pledged the project would provide \$342,000 to fund a police officer's position along with equipment, training and storage for patrol bikes.

Adams said the association probably would have supported the project even without the pledges.

Keenan has said the project would generate \$8.5 million for city services, including an expanded Siltanen Park recreation area, water improvements, school facilities, traffic and safety measures.

Project supporters, including three

City Council members who originally voted to approve the project, say the money would be put to good use. Detractors say the promise amounts to civic bribery, and that the subdivision eventually will be a drain on the city's finances. Opponents refer to studies concluding that single-family housing costs taxpayers more in services than it provides in new taxes.

The City Council approved Keenan's project in November, but opponents gathered enough signatures to put the plan to a public vote. The opposition contends the development plan will harm the environment, ruin the last remaining



Keenan
Pledged
\$340,000 for
police services.

open space in the city and create traffic jams.

The homes would be built on 50 acres within a 200-acre parcel in north Scotts Valley, across the street from where a high school is being built.

Adams said Keenan approached the union April 27 to ask for a written endorsement. The group agreed that night to draft a letter of support.

"We were never approached with the option of paying for it ourselves," Adams added.

Keenan was out of his office late Tuesday and could not be reached for comment.

The mailer is the latest salvo in an ongoing mailbox war, with both sides vying to reach voters.

Keenan spent about \$85,000 on such mailers between January and April, according to city election filings. The opposition had spent about \$22,000 on publicity and had raised more than \$40,000.