

Library branches shelved by shortage of funds

Libraries - 1980-1988

SANTA CRUZ — There isn't even enough money to run the existing library system through next June, let alone consider building new libraries, Santa Cruz County supervisors have been told.

In a report being considered by the supervisors today, County Administrative Officer George Newell points out that the county is \$126,000 short of paying its share of the Santa Cruz City-County Library System budget for 1979-80.

The report is yet another example of Proposition 13 coming home to roost in county government financing.

Newell offers three ways for the county to get itself out of the library hole:

✓ Reorganize or curtail library operations, including consideration of using volunteers at some of the smaller branches.

✓ Use capital outlay funds (salted away to help provide for new branches) to keep the existing system afloat through next year.

✓ Reduce other county services to provide money for the libraries.

If the capital fund money is used for current operations, it obviously no longer will be available for new branches. And even if the fund is not used, Newell suggests, "There is not sufficient financing available to operate . . . new branches together with all current services, without changes in library operations, or a subsidy from

other sources — probably cuts in other county operations."

Newell also reminded the board that any successful solution to the library problems must involve a better working relationship between the county and the City of Santa Cruz, which runs the entire system although it pays just one-third of the cost. Under a formula based on where the users live, the county picks up the other two-thirds.

The county's relationship with the library administration, under the jurisdiction of the city, has been less than perfect over the past several years. Contention reached a peak in the summer of 1978 when the administration closed several small branches.

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