

County is eligible under jobs program

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WASHINGTON — Santa Cruz County is eligible for federal assistance in 13 categories under the \$4.6-billion jobs bill passed by Congress in March.

The county may apply for the programs — which range from repair of federal buildings to maintenance of national parks — because its unemployment rate last year was 11.5 percent, well over the 8 percent cutoff level set by Congress.

The city of Santa Cruz wasn't accepted on the basis of unemployment, but did qualify for \$224,000 under other provisions of the bill.

"We're an 'entitlement city' under the guidelines set by Housing and Community Development," said City Manager Richard Wilson. Eligibility is "based on a formula that includes unemployment, but also the age of our housing stock and other considerations," he said.

At tonight's meeting, the City Council is scheduled to consider which projects will benefit from

the \$224,000.

The county can apply for part of \$1.1 billion available for 2,000 counties, cities and townships that were targeted for special treatment under a formula devised by Rep. Bob Edgar, D-Pa.

"There is no requirement that any of this money go to Santa Cruz County," says Roger Gwinn, press aide to Rep. Vic Fazio D-West Sacramento. He says the money will be allocated by various federal

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departments at their discretion.

"Fazio's office has estimated that California will receive about \$500 million under the jobs bill. This 11.26 percent of the total would be very close to the state's 11.4 percent of the nation's unemployed," said Gwinn.

Fazio has been critical of the Edgar formula, however, because he estimates California will receive only about 7.3 percent, or \$55.28 million of the \$1.1-billion portion of the bill that will be allocated according to that formula.

California does much better under another formula for distributing a different chunk of money in the jobs bill. That formula, devised by Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., is based on the unemployment

rate of the entire state.

Using the Edgar formula, Santa Cruz County is eligible for assistance under the following programs:

- General Services Administration repair of federal buildings. The bill allows \$125 million for this nationwide.
- Department of Transportation mass transit grants of \$132.7 million nationwide.
- Veterans' Administration hospital repair (\$75 million).
- Economic Development Administration grants (\$125 million).
- Small Business Administration loans (\$100 million).
- National Park Service repair of urban parks

(\$40 million).

- National Park maintenance (\$25 million).
- National Forest maintenance (\$85 million).
- Fish and Wildlife facilities (\$20 million).
- Agriculture Department rural water and waste disposal grants (\$75 million.)
- Agriculture Department soil conservation grants for flood control (\$105 million).
- Department of Defense military housing renovation (\$179.6 million).
- Department of Education impact aid for renovations of school facilities located near federal buildings \$60 million).

Sentinel Staff Writer Paul Beatty also contributed to this report.