

New cable TV owners replace 'entire system'

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Plans by Santa Cruz Cable TV to improve service to its customers will include moving its main station to Scotts Valley and building three substations, or hubs, in other areas of the county.

The cable company has begun the permit process to build a satellite earth station and 30,000-square-foot headquarters on Whispering Pines Drive, in Scotts Valley, said Stewart Butler, Santa Cruz Cable TV's general manager. The company's business office is now on May Avenue, off Water Street, in Santa Cruz.

All satellite signals would be received through the Scotts Valley station and go out on fiber optic cable to three hubs, where smaller offices would be located, Butler said. One hub will be located in the Rancho Del Mar shopping Center in Aptos, another somewhere in Santa Cruz and the third, in either Bonny Doon or the San Lorenzo Valley, he said.

The company plans to lease all offices, including the main office, Butler said, and will occupy them as soon as possible. The office plan is a continuation of work already started by the company to upgrade the system.

"Basically, what we're doing is replacing the entire cable system," Butler said.

Much of the cable line now in

use will be replaced with new cable, he said. The only old part of the system that will remain is serviceable existing underground conduit. The company will be digging trenches in some areas for new underground conduit and replacing any old conduit that is substandard.

Butler said work must be completed on the system, according to the cable company's contract, 30 months from July 30. That would place the completion date at around December 1991 or January 1992, he said.

All subscribers in the company's jurisdiction will receive the same number of channels, about 58, with 45 or 46 included in the basic cable service, when work is completed on the system, Butler said. The number of channels now received varies in different areas.

Residents of Capitola, Watsonville and a portion of rural Aptos are served by Sonic Cable TV. Santa Cruz Cable TV serves the rest of the county, in areas where cable TV is available.

Butler said many improvements to the system will take place simultaneously, but was reluctant to describe them in detail until something substantial is completed to show residents.

"There's a real history here in Santa Cruz of cable companies saying they're going to do this and they're going to do that," he said, "and then they don't do it."