

*SC Growth*

# Supervisors set '81 growth rate of 2.1 percent

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SANTA CRUZ — After a lengthy and sometimes heated debate, the Board of Supervisors Tuesday set the growth rate for Santa Cruz County's unincorporated area at 2.1 percent for 1981.

That's a drop of 0.3 percent from the rate set for this year, but higher than the actual figure by which the unincorporated area's population increased.

The board chose the middle of three rates presented by the county planning department, which proposed high and low rates of 3.1 percent and 1.5 percent.

Under the mandate of Measure J, the county's voter-approved growth control ordinance, the board each year must establish a population growth goal for the county. It is from that figure that the number of available building permits is determined.

Tuesday's public hearing on the issue heard testimony from both the pro-growth and no-growth factions of the community.

"I was brought up believing in the three great mysteries of life: the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Now I know there's a fourth, setting the county's growth rate," quipped Bruce Reed, president of the Santa Cruz County Builders Exchange.

Reed asked the supervisors to authorize 1,204 building permits for the coming year. By setting the 2.1 percent rate, the board fell 126 permits short of Reed's request.

Other county residents pleaded for a variety of differ-

ent rates, ranging from none at all to a totally open market.

Citing problems with traffic, water shortages and pollution, Mary Hammer of the Environmental Council urged the lowest suggested rate of 1.5 percent.

One San Lorenzo Valley resident compared Santa Cruz to a lifeboat, saying the "county is drowning itself, and the lifeboat only holds so many people."

In addition to an unknown number of low- to moderate-income housing permits carried over from this year, the county will issue a total of 937 market-value permits, and 141 low-moderate housing permits.

Just because the board sets a 2.1 percent growth rate, however, does not mean the county's population will grow by exactly that much. Last year the unincorporated area grew 1.8 percent, less than the allowed 2.4 percent rate.

The planning commission attributed the discrepancy to low- to moderate-income housing that was allowed for, but not built.

The board rejected a plea by Supervisor Gary Patton for a rate more in line with the state's overall growth last year of 1.8 percent.

When Patton's motion for that rate failed, Supervisor Dan Forbus moved adoption of the 2.1 figure and Patton switched his vote, saying, "I'll take what I can get."

That left Supervisor Chris Matthews as the lone holdout for the lower rate.

Supervisor Marilyn Liddicoat did not attend Tuesday's board meeting.