

Dave Koester

New City Manager Is A 'Generalist'

By Sy Berg

"We'll be moving in around the 26th of the month," said Dave Koester, Santa Cruz city manager designate.

Koester, who flew in from Roseville yesterday to arrange for living quarters for his family, leaned back in his chair with relief.

"It's nice to have that settled," he sighed.

His visit had been short but busy. Besides renting a house (we'll buy later when he gets a

chance to get settled") and arranging for transfer of three of his children to elementary schools here, the new manager had a brief meeting with the city council and the mayor last night to discuss policies and procedure.

But Dave Koester is a man accustomed to quick changes.

From a quiet boyhood on a Montana farm, his entire future was reshaped by WW II. He served in the coast guard, met his wife Jean in California, and then took the opportunity to go to college under the G. I. bill.

"I couldn't enter until I was 26," he said, "but I wouldn't have made it otherwise because we couldn't afford it."

After graduating from the University of Oregon with a degree in civil engineering, Koester decided to go into the city management field.

"Today is an age of specialization," he said thoughtfully, "but I have more of an interest in being a 'generalist' than a specialist."

He attended the University of Kansas under a special program sponsored by the Carnegie foundation and served as an assistant city manager as part of the training.

"A good deal of the work of a city manager deals with technical matters," he said, "and there is no question but that my training in engineering has proven helpful.

"However, having a capable staff is important, and my knowledge has been useful in understanding and coordinating the work of the specialists."

Dave Koester is a man who meets problems head-on.

"As for the press," he said, looking a reporter in the eye, "my door is always open. You have your job to do, and I have mine."

Minutes later he was flying back to Roseville. City Clerk Jack Miller, acting city manager, joined him on the flight "to get better acquainted."

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