

Salomon expected to take manager's job in Visalia

STAFF REPORT

WATSONVILLE — City Manager Steve Salomon, who has guided Watsonville through an economically turbulent 1990s, plans to resign his position soon to become manager of the City of Visalia.

Salomon, who was appointed Watsonville's top administrator six years ago, said today his appoint-

ment in Visalia is "not a done deal," but that he expects to be named manager in Visalia.

"I really have enjoyed working here," Salomon said. "There's all kinds of incredibly talented people who work here (at city hall)."

Salomon informed council members several days ago he was a candidate for the post in Visalia, a city

of 94,000 in the south San Joaquin Valley. Two council members said today Watsonville will be hurt by his departure.

"It's our loss, really," said Vice Mayor Al Alcala. "He's just really a natural born leader. Everybody who works under him works at a little faster speed."

Councilman Dennis Osmer cred-

ited Salomon with "an extraordinary job" of trimming city staff levels while not hurting services and also obtaining "a tremendous amount" of grant money.

"I kind of hate to lose him," Osmer said. "I hope we can replace him with someone just as dynamic."

Salomon, 48, is scheduled to attend a council meeting in Visalia

Monday, during which his appointment is expected to be announced. Randy Groom, Visalia's city clerk, said to-



Salomon

day it remains "a little premature" to discuss the appointment, but did confirm the council will make an appointment Monday.

"Until that happens we're really pretty conservative about making comments," Groom said.

Salomon is paid \$107,000 by the City of Watsonville. Visalia's previous manager was paid \$94,000, although salary for the new manager is negotiable, Groom said. "I expect it will pay more than that."

Salomon, whose tenure coincided with double-digit unemployment in the city, a loss of an industrial base and the rise in such social problems as gangs and overcrowded housing, said he would remain on the job in Watsonville until sometime in December. He said he would offer any assistance he could afterward.

"I have a lot of interest in making sure this community continues to do well," he said.

Salomon praised the community for overcoming the economic adversities attached to the 1989 earthquake, the 1995 floods and the loss of much of its frozen food industry.

"It's the kind of community where people are amazingly resilient," he said.

Salomon said his personal situation also figured in his decision to seek the Visalia job. He and his wife, Kathy, have three children, one of whom is graduating from high school this year and another who will enter high school next year. Their youngest will enter seventh grade.