

Healthy ^{GROWTH} growth in county seen for many years ahead ✓

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By NANCY BARR

Santa Cruz County's population will grow to 334,530 by the year 2020, according to a forecast prepared by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG).

The county's 1980 population as tallied by the Census Bureau was 188,141.

The population estimate, along with an estimate of the county's growth in employment — to a level more than double the 1980 figure — is included in a draft report just released by AMBAG.

"Economic growth potential is a measure of the combined forces of demand from outside the region (i.e. state and

national economies) and local growth policies and expectations," the report says. "The growth scenario presented here is one possible trend among many."

The figures presented are based on a series of assumptions, and because of that, AMBAG cautions that the employment and population forecasts are merely estimates based on available information.

"The purpose of this report is simply to extend our current growth assumptions to the year 2020," the report says, "to provide a regional alternative to projections developed by the State of California and, most importantly, to express a clear

relationship of the linkages between the local economy and the local population."

The report begins with a projection of the growth in employment by the year 2020, then derives a population estimate from the employment figures.

The forecasted increase in the number of jobs is based largely on a set of assumptions AMBAG staff members put together after evaluating the national and state economies, county and city general plans, economic development plans and the opinions of public officials and the business community.

The assumptions are that:

—The nation will avoid a

major war.

—Political and economic institutions will not undergo radical change.

—California will continue to account for 10 percent of the nation's population and economy.

—The Monterey Bay area will continue to represent about 2 percent of the state's jobs and population.

—The Monterey Bay area will become more industrialized.

—The tourist industry will grow significantly.

—Agricultural sales also will grow substantially, but agricultural acreage and employment will remain fairly steady.

—Transportation to and from

the area will improve.

—Exports to Pacific basin nations will increase.

—Military installations in the area will undergo modest growth.

—Population will grow as a result of an increase in the number of jobs in the county.

—Overall economic activity will grow in the region and will bring more people into the area, which in turn will foster growth in jobs in areas serving the local population.

—Public planning policies will allow for new housing, roads and other needs of the resident population.

AMBAG predicts there will be 172,140 jobs in Santa Cruz

County, as compared with the 84,853 jobs as of the 1980 census.

The greatest growth will occur, the report says, in retail and wholesale trade, manufacturing and the service industries.

AMBAG's population forecast, derived from its employment projection, uses trends on what percentage of the adult population tends to participate in the labor force. Based on the percentage of people between the ages of 18 and 64 who work, and accounting for the fact that more women are entering the labor force, AMBAG predicts that in the year 2020, there will

Continued on page 10

Growth

Continued from page 1
be 231,680 people in that age group in the county.

AMBAG staff then accounted for the percentage of the population that would likely be too old or too young to work, or for some other reason not be counted as part of the labor force, and came up with the

total population forecast of 334,530 in the county 20 years into the next century.

The AMBAG draft report has been distributed to a business and government agencies in the county for comment, and a final report will be published at the end of the summer.