

# Councilman calls for Sonic Cable boycott

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Rates for Sonic Cable TV have risen more than 60 percent in less than one year, and one Capitola Council member is not going to take it lying down.

Council member Jerry Clarke suggested a mass disconnection of the service in protest of the fee increases.

Sonic Cable delivers programming to more than 6,500 Watsonville-area customers, 3,400 Capitola customers, and about 4,000 customers in unincorporated parts of the county.

The federal government deregulated cable companies last year and since that time, Sonic has raised the basic rate from \$8.95 to \$13.95.

"It's just shocking to see what has happened," Clarke said. "When the federal government deregulated the industry, what they did was give them license to steal. They have the franchise and the system hooked up so we can't get any competition."

Clarke said he hopes that a mass disconnection of the service will have enough financial impact on the company to be effective.

Clarke said anyone wanting to join the boycott should write a letter addressed to Sonic requesting the service be disconnected as of April 1 in

protest of fee increases. The letter should be signed, and sent to Clarke at 502 El Salto Drive, Capitola, CA 95010.

If there are enough letters to make an impact, Clarke said, he will forward them to Sonic. Telephone numbers, he said, should also be included so that Clarke can update boycotters on progress of the letter drive.

"What aggravates me the most," he said, "is that they are hurting those people on fixed incomes the most by raising the basic rate and decreasing the premium rate." Then they say they are upgrading the system by throwing in some obscure channels that they bought for pennies. That's baloney! We have enough channels."

Clarke said he would demand that the company not charge a reconnection fee for anyone joining in the boycott. "I plan to negotiate that out," he said.

Sonic general manager Les Johnson said Sonic offers a rate for the basic 22 channels less than most of the cable companies serving nearby counties.

"We are charging for our product what we think it is worth," Johnson said. "We're spending \$180,000 on the system to continue giving good service, and I hope the people in this area realize they have gotten a real bargain."