

Santa Cruz gets new fire chief

SANTA CRUZ — Acting Fire Chief Ed Ekers, a 10-year veteran of the Santa Cruz Fire Department, was named to the position full time today by City Manager Dick Wilson.

Ekers joined the department in 1975 as firefighter, eventually moving on to become a captain, acting division chief, then acting fire chief in December when Tony Pini announced his resignation to assume the fire chief's job in Santa Rosa.

Ekers, a bachelor, said he foresaw no major changes immediately, although he did mention that he would like to expand the department's training program as well as its fire-prevention activities.

Ekers will be taking over the 42-person department as of today and will be responsible for overseeing a budget of \$2.2 million, Wilson said.

Wilson said he appointed Ekers because of the "outstanding job" he did while acting fire chief.

"He earned the job," Wilson said. "He simply did an outstanding job in the interim."

Wilson likewise expressed satisfaction with the state of the department and noted that "we are moving in the right direction."

Ekers also noted that the department faces "no major problems at the time" and that "morale is fairly high" within the department.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Ed Ekers went from acting chief to full-time chief

Wilson noted the city had begun to advertise for the position outside of Santa Cruz, but decided to promote internally, never reaching the stage of interviewing out-of-town candidates.

Ekers was selected over one other candidate for the position.

Pini had been the fire chief for nearly six years prior to the announcement of his resignation in December.