

Chamber of Commerce

Original 1900 Chamber Was Santa Cruz Board Of Trade

The Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce is the same age as the 20th Century.

But it was called the Santa Cruz Board of Trade when it was founded in 1900 by a group of businessmen to push the economic interests of the community.

Then in 1908, when Thomas Kelly was ending four consecutive years as group president, the directors recommended that the organization be called the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce. The change was made the same year when J. P. Twist took over the presidency.

On Sept. 14, 1920, the CofC was incorporated to push the same economic concerns that had led to formation of the group at the turn of the century.

The Board of Trade did not expire without rich honors, however. In November of 1907, for example, the group prepared on request a 500-word description of Santa Cruz for the Encyclopedia Britannica.

In 1908 it welcomed the entire U. S. Atlantic Fleet to Santa Cruz Harbor.

And by dint of lobbying efforts the group got a \$90,000 federal allocation for the construction of the original post office building on Front Street.

The site was bought for \$15,000, the Board of Trade records show, and the building was put up in 1912 at a total cost of \$105,000. Since then, it has been enlarged twice.

Another notable accomplishment for the group was its early efforts to preserve not only local parks but all state parks from the lumberman's axe. This was at a time when environmentalism had yet to become the popular concept it is today.

Another big battle for the group down through the de-

CADES was concerned with roads. The record shows that back in 1913 the CofC was trying to get state action for a highway from San Jose "over the Santa Cruz Mountains via Los Gatos Canyon, Schulthe's Pass, down what is known as Scotts Valley into Santa Cruz."

It was the CofC in the early 1920s that founded the Miss California Pageant locally. Paddy Smith of Ben Lomond was an original hostess.

The group also founded what is now called today the county Convention and Visitors Bureau.

And in 1975, the CofC did what as it rounded off its "diamond anniversary" year under presidency of Judy Hurst Sadlier?

Highlights have been reported as follows by Jerry Hunt, CofC general manager:

TRANSPORTATION - The CofC continued its traditional battle for roads by lobbying the county transportation commission to retain in its transportation plan the ultimate provision of an eastern access road to UCSC. CofC representatives, working jointly with UCSC students, made a complete review of the plan and provided constructive comments.

PROPERTY TAX - The CofC supported a study of various approaches to the problem of rising property valuations and assessments and conducted a forum at Cabrillo College to inform property owners on all aspects of the tax system.

SCHOOLS - The CofC came out actively to support override tax increases proposed by Santa Cruz City Schools for the high school district and the elementary school district.

LAFC - The CofC played a role in influencing the Local Agency Formation Commission to determine spheres of influence for the cities of

Capitola and Santa Cruz as a prerequisite to any annexations in the Live Oak area.

HOSTEL - The CofC supported the hostel association's requests for funding for a pilot project on the north coast but at the same time expressed concern that buildings of historical value not be exposed to any massive use.

SPRING FAIR - The CofC operated a booth highlighting the connection between the tourist industry and the local arts and crafts industry.

COMMUNITY - The CofC worked to set up a local development corporation to help fund facilities for small industry. As envisaged, the facilities will enable small groups to get started and to make their contribution to the local economy.

SMALL BUSINESS - The CofC coordinated efforts by a group of retired business executives to provide free counseling service once monthly to small businesses on such technical matters as management, marketing, personnel, sales.

JUVENILE EMPLOYMENT - The CofC provided assistance to young people applying for their first jobs.

EAST SIDE - The CofC developed collective action for improvements on the city's east side, with particular attention directed toward traffic and parking to aid the merchants in this area.

COASTAL PLAN - CofC representatives testified at hearings on the ninth element of the coastal plan, urging that policy decisions relating to the coastal environment remain within the ultimate jurisdiction of the local elected authorities.

INSURANCE - The CofC made available group life, health and dental insurance for both large and small employers at a reasonable group rate.

HISTORICAL - The CofC participated in developing bases for the final draft of city's historical preservation ordinance.

OPEN MARKET - The CofC assisted the Santa Cruz Association of Artists and Craftspeople by supporting first location of the Open Market on the county government center parking lot and then the head of the Pacific Avenue Garden Mall during the Christmas season.

CofC

There will soon be memories on the walls in the Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce office than you would care to dust in a week of days.

The faces go from Today, way, way back in Yesteryear, each nicely framed as befits the dignity of a past CofC president.

CofC workers Hazel Cleveland and Sharon Little are displaying the photographs together now to give the past president the public salutes they deserve for dedicated community service.

But some photos are missing. Cleveland reports, and the CofC will be grateful if people in the community will help to make the honor gallery complete by providing them.

The CofC began as the Santa Cruz Board of Trade in 1900, according to CofC records, there is no listing of who the first president was. Anyone know?

Then came these presidents of the early years, with photos of each urgently needed:

Thomas Kelly, 1904-08; J. P. Twist, 1908-09; H. A. Vartchiana, 1909-1