

San Lorenzo Valley Chamber In Unanimous Vote For Junior College In Santa Cruz County

San Lorenzo valley chamber of commerce directors last night voted unanimously in favor of establishment of a junior college in Santa Cruz county and heard a comprehensive report from a state highway engineer regarding proposed road improvements in the area.

In the absence of both President Carl Conelly and Vice President Jack Diggins, Secretary Alice Earl Wilder presided at the session in the library building at Ben Lomond.

Directors Earl Adams, a member of the valley unified school board, and John Pletschet, Valley Sun publisher, and Mrs. Wilder spoke in behalf of the formation of a junior college district in the county. The valley school trustees are on record as favoring the county setup.

On motion of W. S. Kewer, seconded by Bob Foutz, the directors put the chamber on record as favoring the college.

C. F. Greene, assistant to J. P. Sinclair, district engineer of Division IV, told valley chamber directors, members and guests that engineering studies have been made as to possible relocation of Highway 9 (State Route 116) between Santa Cruz and Felton but that no funds are available now for the proposed project or for any major improvements to the road.

Several times he stressed the point that limited funds make it mandatory for the highway commission to approve only projects which are badly needed in the state. If the state legislature provides more funds through an increased gasoline tax this year, additional projects can be handled, he said.

Before introducing the speaker, Mrs. Wilder pointed out that in the 1947 highways priority program set up for this county, the two San Lorenzo valley projects in the top 10 listed have not been done whereas work has been completed on several of the other projects and some improvements have been made to others on the list.

Proposed plans for relocating Highway 9 include use of Graham Hill road from Felton for several miles and then putting in a cutoff leading to Highway 17, entering this route near the Sims road. No definite estimate of cost has been made as yet, Greene said. If and when this highway is built, the present River road would go to the county, he added.

It would be very expensive to make major improvements to the present road, the engineer said. "We might possibly encounter worse slides than we have now and, as you know, these slides mean heavy maintenance cost and closing of the highway much of the time during rainy periods," he added.

Other points brought out by Greene during his talk and through questions from the audience:

Studies are being made on a proposed four-lane divided highway for No. 17 between Santa Cruz and Scotts Valley, making it a limited access freeway. (No definite plans or cost figures as yet.)

Proposal for a link between the end of the Santa Cruz-Watsonville freeway at Morrisey boulevard and Mission street leading to Coast road is being studied but the plan has not been presented to the highway commission.

The Highway 9 improvement between Boulder Creek and the Swiss Chalet last year cost \$281,000.

The 1950 state highway deficiency figure for Santa Cruz county was \$19,000,000 but it will take many years before all the work deemed necessary can be done because of limited funds. For the five years (1953-57), a minimum of \$2,440,000 has been allotted to Santa Cruz county projects and of this amount, \$1,180,000 already have been budgeted.

Only maintenance work is planned for the state highway to Big Basin and for Highway 9 between Felton and Boulder Creek. The Blue slide area was repaired last year.

County Surveyor Arnold Bald-

win and County Road Commissioner Fred Pracht were guests and answered several questions. Baldwin told how Santa Cruz county has an agreement with the state and San Francisco and San Mateo counties for joint highway work on the Coast road. Pracht said plans have been prepared for the new \$80,000 Bear creek road bridge near Boulder Creek and pointed out that resurfacing and realignment of more than a mile of Graham Hill road is now being done. Further work on Mount Hermon road is planned, he said.

Adams, chairman of the chamber's membership committee, reported new members of the chamber include Locatelli Bros. Grocery, Valley Machine Shop and J. Doran.

Mrs. Wilder read a letter from A. D. Edmiston, state engineer, saying Albert J. Dolcini of his office will appear at the chamber's May 27 meeting to give a report on the forthcoming state water survey in this county.

Directors authorized Kadj Wolff, chairman of the auditing and by-laws committee, to proceed with in corporation of the chamber following his report on minor changes in the by-laws. Attorney Bert Snyder is handling the legal phases. Cost will not exceed \$25, Mrs. Wilder said.

The secretary said she will represent the valley chamber, which entered a protest some months ago against the proposed telephone rate increase, at the PUC hearing on the request starting April 29 in San Francisco. She said that Al Athearn, manager of the Santa Cruz office of the telephone company, had informed her that extended service to the valley and Aptos areas undoubtedly will be given if the rate increase is granted.

Kewer reported that there is a custodian now at the county dump near Ben Lomond and he will show people where to dump their trash and other material in an orderly fashion.