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Pete Amos/Sentinel

Dave Hedges, Freddie Thompson at Bean Creek Road cave-in.

Somehow county sticking together

By JOHN McNICHOLAS
Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — It was a relatively quiet night, county emergency officials said, although more than two inches of pounding rain caused some road closures, including one lane of Highway 17.

A 70-foot-long slipout a mile south of the summit undermined one northbound lane of the busy highway, snarling commuter traffic for more than an hour this morning, said CalTrans spokeswoman Lynn Reich in San Jose. The lane will be closed for five to ten days she said, with signs directing traffic around the threatened portion.

A mudslide near Aromas ruptured the main gas transmission line into Santa Cruz County, said Dick Smith of PG&E. Gas was shut off at 9:30 this morning, but

Smith said a parallel or standby pipeline is operating and should meet the needs of all small businesses and residences in the county.

Heavy gas users, such as nurseries, food processors and UCSC were alerted and have shifted to other sources energy.

The damaged main is 10 inches diameter and packs 400 pounds of pressure. Aromas firefighters evacuated some 20 residents near the slide on Anzar Road.

Heavy showers and thundershowers predicted for today continue to hamper army and county crews working to cut through mountains of soft, moving mud and give access to isolated residents in Lompico and Lockhart Gulch.

The rain should decrease Friday, said

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the National Weather Service forecaster Norm Hoffmann in Redwood City, but will pick up again Sunday and could continue through next week.

The Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District this morning approved a combination shuttle bus-ferry service for the stranded Lompico residents. Supervisor's Chairman Joe Cucchiara said this morning. "We are working to put the pieces together now," he said.

The slide across Lockhart Gulch Road cut power to several residents, and to the pump which supplies some 70 residents with water, according to PG&E Electrical Superintendent John Fisher.

County Emergency Officer Bill Plageman said he's looking for a 7,500 watt generator to run the pump until emergency lines can be strung, Plageman said.

Plageman said there were no major storm-related incidents reported by firefighters of police agencies in the county Wednesday or today.

He said county officials remain "quite concerned. We're getting a lot of rain on ground that's already saturated, but so far things have held together fairly well — quite well, as a matter of fact."

The contractors for the one-lane access road into Lompico, Granite Construction, estimate the work will take seven to 10 days, if the weather is good. Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin Friday

morning, said Cucchiara.

"Some folks have decided to move out until the temporary road is completed, but by and large, most are coping extremely well," he continued.

Plageman said the county health officer surveyed the residents there, and found them to be healthy.

County officials were meeting with American Red Cross officials this morning in an attempt to expand the help that organization is providing. A state representative was on her way to Lompico this morning to assess the conditions, and determine the needs there.

Conditions of major roads are: Two Bar Road, open; Bean Creek Road, closed by a slipout at the 1500 block; Granite Creek Road, one lane open; Bear Creek Road, open; Empire Grade, one lane open; Old San Jose Road, one lane open; Schulties Road, closed; Redwood Lodge, closed; Upper Zayante Road, one lane open; Lockhart Gulch Road, closed at the two-mile marker; Smith Grade, closed at the 2.5 mile marker from Empire Grade; Valencia Road, closed; Valencia School Road, closed; Morrell Cutoff, closed; Paulsen Road, closed; Whiting Road, closed; Fernwood Drive, closed; Prescott Road, closed; Harkins Slough Road, closed; Highway 9, closed between Felton and Santa Cruz.

Rainfall reports for 24 hours ending at 8 a.m. today, and including the season's totals (since July 1) and those of last year at this time, are as follows:

| | 24 Hrs. | Season | Last Year |
|-----------------|---------|--------|-----------|
| Aptos | 1.0 | 37.97 | 35.62 |
| Ben Lomond | 1.60 | 86.18 | |
| Bonny Doon | 1.40 | 81.42 | 69.03 |
| Boulder Creek | 2.10 | 100.24 | 74.56 |
| Corralitos | .66 | 44.47 | 40.19 |
| Freedom | .84 | 35.83 | 31.0 |
| Felton | 1.43 | 72.58 | 60.60 |
| Graham Hill | 1.35 | 58.30 | 51.45 |
| Lompico | 2.0 | 98.95 | 79.0 |
| Natural Bridges | .94 | 33.37 | 29.99 |
| Pine Flat | 1.92 | 104.58 | 78.73 |
| Rio del Mar | .95 | 39.44 | 37.14 |
| Santa Cruz | 1.19 | 41.06 | 37.40 |
| Scotts Valley | 1.87 | 71.01 | 59.33 |
| Soquel | 1.08 | 44.29 | 40.66 |
| Swanton | 1.30 | 48.35 | 41.53 |

SS amendments