

# North Coast Feud Now Centers On Nuclear Plant

By WALLACE WOOD  
Sentinel Staff Writer

Like a rich uncle, Pacific Gas and Electric Company has walked into a family feud and wound up as the center of it because of its proposal for a \$200-million electric power plant near Davenport.

Not only does the idea of a "nuke" plant raise the hackles of conservationists who want to keep the North Coast clear of development.

It is also the hottest issue in a five-way political fight for the post of county supervisor from the Seaside District, which covers the North Coast as well as most of the City of Santa Cruz.

Yet it is a plant which may not be built at all, or at least not for a number of years, according to PG&E.

Present Seaside Supervisor

John R. McCallie said he asked PG&E to call Thursday's news conference to announce it is taking out an option of 6,800 acres of Coast Dairies and Lands properties.

McCallie said he has heard speculation about the plant for several months, but until recently PG&E would only confirm "they have been looking for sites, but have been unable to give any definite answers as to locations."

One of McCallie's Political challengers, Philip Harry, recently ran an advertisement calling the proposal an "atomic pollution plant" which would degrade the environment.

Another challenger, Henry Faitz, announced Thursday he is pulling out of the supervisorial race and threw his support to Harry as an "environmentalist" who would fight the forces

threatening the "priceless environment of this county."

Faitz numbered the nuclear plant proposal as one of several things threatening the North Coast, including freeways and urban sprawl. McCallie "appears to support" the nuclear plant idea, Faitz said.

Not everybody is fighting the PG&E plant. Francis Gregory, a Davenport community leader, said after the announcement that "it sounds like a great idea. It's what we have been awaiting for a long time." He indicated it will not only provide jobs, but will stimulate the Davenport area's development.

Environmentalists and conservationists are also mad because they blame PG&E's proposal for delaying a "holding zone" plan for the North Coast. Supervisors were holding hearings on the

10-acre minimum agriculture zoning, but took no action largely because of the request of Coast Dairies and Land's attorney, Gene Adams, that the hearing be delayed. It will be opened again in May.

The holding zone, conservationists hope, will stop development for at least one to two years until a precise zoning plan for the North Coast can be worked out by the county.

Faitz pointed with derision to Adams' reply to a question by Aptos Supervisor Ralph Sanson at the last hearing: "Do you have any plans whatsoever for any kind whatsoever out there in the next few months?" Sanson asked. Adams replied, "None, whatsoever." Sanson, with Henry Mello, voted against

continuing the hearing, but lost, 3-to-2.

Adams had pointed out that Coast Dairies and Lands manager Fred Pfyffer was in Switzerland at the time, however, discussing the property with the landowners.

Yet this zoning issue was knocked down, somewhat, at Thursday's news conference when PG&E was asked what kind of zoning would be necessary for construction of the power plant.

"Even agricultural zoning presently permits an electrical generating facility by use permit," County Planning Director Bert Muhly replied from the audience.

And PG&E vice president Fred Melke indicated that PG&E might not object to a

holding zone "as long as our proposals are taken into account." McCallie added he has "no intention of changing his support for the holding zone."

In response to a question, Melke also said PG&E could legally arrange condemnation of land for force location of a power site, but added, "we would never do this. We prefer to work with local agencies."

Another possible sore point with conservationists was touched on by another news man, who asked if the large transmission lines to carry power from the plant to the San Jose area might go underground.

"There is an immense cost to undergrounding," PG&E chief engineer Burton Shackelford replied. "It is about 20

times the cost of overhead lines, and it would mean cutting a wide swath of land with deep benches and cuts through the hills, scarring the whole area."

PG&E has a policy of "making power lines compatible with the areas they must cross," Shackelford added.

Threats of radioactivity for the atomic plant, or an "explosion" were said to be virtually non-existent. Shackelford explained it is technically impossible for a nuclear reactor-generator to explode, since it uses a totally different type of "fuel" and is built differently from a bomb. The Atomic Energy Commission also places strict safety precautions on all reactors to prevent escape of all but the lowest level of radioactivity.