



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Workers putting utility lines underground in downtown Ben Lomond Tuesday are harbingers of things to come — a traffic light on Route 9 at the Mill Street intersection.

## Changes coming to Ben Lomond

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**BEN LOMOND** — Get ready for the town's first traffic signal.

The light will go in at Highway 9 and Mill Street-Glen Arbor Road, where Pacific Gas and Electric Co. is wrapping up a project to place its powerlines underground.

Once the lines are relocated, Santa Cruz County crews will follow by making street improvements in downtown Ben Lomond, including installing the traffic light. The project is estimated to take about six weeks.

People are generally adopting a wait-and-see attitude about the signal, said Mike Scarborough of Scarborough Lumber and president of the town's business association.

"It may be the best thing to happen in town," he said. "It may be the worst. It may not make any difference, but we won't know until they get it in."

The signal is in response to a petition drive led by a San Lorenzo Val-

ley resident several years ago. Public hearings were held before the light was approved, said county Supervisor Fred Keeley, who represents the area.

The light is expected to make crossing the highway safer for pedestrians and motorists.

PG&E hopes to finish its work sometime between Friday and Sept. 27.

Alan Andersen of Andersen Jewelry Design and a director of the business association said he hoped the project will eventually lead to a nicer downtown.

"I'm sure everyone will like to avoid any kind of mess, but that's life," he said. "Smile and keep going on."

Once the power lines are relocated, the county will send in crews to complete a \$500,000 improvement project, building storm drains, sidewalks and adding the signal.

The project may be completed in the next four to six weeks, according to a rough estimate by county offi-

cials.

"It's inconvenient, but people are looking beyond what's immediately in front of them," said Keeley, who praised PG&E crews for their cooperation with the local businesses.

It will eventually make the entire area more attractive, he said.

Another large project on Highway 9 is under way just past Boulder Creek, where the state Department of Transportation is building two retaining walls to repair a slipout, a spot where the road has given out under the highway. It occurred during last year's storms.

The \$293,630 Caltrans project will construct 60-foot retaining walls using steel beams and timber.

There is a temporary signal about a half-mile north of the Highway 236 junction to control traffic while crews work on the project.

Delays of about five minutes are expected.

The project began Aug. 9 and is expected to be completed by the end of September.