

# Capitola city manager to leave

By DONNA KIMURA  
Sentinel staff writer

CAPITOLA — Longtime City Manager Steve Burrell is leaving Capitola to become the top administrator in Hermosa Beach.

He is expected to announce his decision at tonight's City Council meeting.

His new job will start at the beginning of next year.

Burrell, 45, has been city manager here 14 years and is credited with helping make it a commercial power in Santa Cruz County.

"His talents don't ever stop," Mayor Ron Graves said Wednesday. "He is concerned about every citizen."

His style is exemplified by an open-door policy at



**Burrell**

## Burrell will take job in Hermosa Beach

City Hall, said Graves, who was on the City Council that hired Burrell in 1979.

Burrell will be leaving one California coastal city for another.

With 22,000 residents, Hermosa Beach has a population more than twice that of Capitola. The Southern California city's \$10-million operating budget is roughly \$2 million more than Capitola's.

Burrell said the move will give him a chance to spearhead the revitalization of Hermosa Beach's old downtown.

Maintenance in the area has fallen behind during the last several years, according to Hermosa Beach Mayor Albert Wiemans.

"We want him to put life in what we got," Wiemans

said.

Burrell was chosen out from 87 applicants seeking to replace former City Manager Rick Ferrin, who took a position in state government.

"Ninty percent of the applicants were impressive," Wiemans said. "Mr. Burrell came out on top."

He is one of several new faces that may be in Hermosa Beach city government next year. A Nov. 2 election could place a new majority on the five-seat City Council.

Burrell said he will earn roughly the same as his current \$92,000 salary. His Hermosa Beach salary will be about \$87,000 plus several benefits such as a car allowance.

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# Capitola

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He has been a key figure in the commercial growth of Capitola.

Burrell also has been involved in the rehabilitation of Capitola Village and the city's wharf.

When Burrell began with the city, fields complete with grazing cattle could be found on 41st Avenue. The street has since become a major commercial thoroughfare in the county.

Longtime City Councilman Mick Routh, who was mayor when Burrell was hired, credits the administrator with developing the area, which includes an auto plaza and several shopping centers.

"We're losing one of the best city managers in Central California," he said.

Toni Castro, director of the Capitola Chamber of Commerce, said Burrell helped bring some of the large department stores to the Capitola Mall.

Burrell was the chamber's "man of the year" in 1987.

Routh attributed Burrell's departure to the "political climate" created by city Treasurer Glenn Hanna.

Hanna, who was elected last year, has claimed that officials mishandled a \$10 million city bond in 1986 when the city did not make several debt-service payments due to improper billings. The county grand jury also found "irregularities" in the management of the bonds.

The problem was corrected and the city did not default, according to Routh.

Hanna took his case to District Attorney Art Danner, but Danner determined that a criminal prosecution of any city official was unwarranted.

"I just wish Mr. Burrell the best of luck in his new job," Hanna said on Wednesday. "That's all I have to say."

There has been no pressure on Burrell to leave, according to City Council members.

"We're really sorry he is going to be gone," said Councilwoman Margaret Fabrizio. "It's a move up for him."

It is just the right time to leave, Burrell said.

His daughter graduated from Soquel High School this year and his son is in the eighth grade at New Brighton Middle School.

Burrell said he wanted to move before his son started high school so he would be able to spend four years at one school.

He's returning to a familiar area, having grown up in Southern California. Before coming to Capitola, he worked as an assistant city manager in San Clemente and Rolling Hills Estates.