

# Bids come in too high for Live Oak pool project

By ERIN K. QUIRK  
Sentinel staff writer

LIVE OAK — The 17th Avenue Community Swim Center suffered another setback in the 17-year process to build an oasis in the heart of a crowded Live Oak.

Eight contractors bid on the project Tuesday, but the lowest bid came in \$1.6 million over the architect's \$6.2 million estimate, said Tom Burns director of the County Redevelopment Agency.

Burns insisted this is only a minor setback for the complex that

will provide Live Oak with a 50-meter lap pool, waterslide, wading pool, locker rooms and meeting rooms. He expects it will add no more than six months to the pool project that had been expected to be finished in the summer of 1997.

The redevelopment agency will meet with the architect and the potential contractors to try to understand the discrepancy between the estimate and the submitted bids. Burns said the agency will present a recommendation, a course of ac-

*Please see LIVE OAK — BACK PAGE*

## Live Oak pool project

*Continued from Page A1*

tion and a timeline for the project at the April 23 Board of Supervisors meeting.

Burns said they plan to review the entire layout in order to shave dollars off the complex.

"We can go through a building like this and make a lot of decisions not to do things as nicely but still let it be functional," Burns said.

The project began in 1979 when a handful of parents and supporters of the Santa Cruz Aquatic Team began lobbying for a swimming pool in Live Oak. Over the years eager residents have watched their kids grow up and move away without ever setting foot in the 50-meter pool.

When Sentinel reporters interviewed parents in the late '80s — including Jan Beautz, first district supervisor — most hoped the pool would be built before their children grew up. Several years and many grown-up kids later, the project is still hitting snags.

But Burns is not concerned for the future of the project and said this setback is relatively minor in comparison to others in the past.

"I've heard these stories for years," Burns said. "But until four or five years ago there was no real source of financing for the project. There was a lot of talk but no substantial money."

State grants and funding by the County Redevelopment Agency as well as over \$600,000 raised by the Pool of Dreams volunteer organiza-

tion have helped to fund the project. Volunteers even raised enough money to upgrade from a 25-meter to a 50-meter pool.

"I don't think we could have gotten this far with a downbeat attitude," said Live Oak resident Brigid Simpkins who has been instrumental in the fund-raising effort. "We are very committed and optimistic."

Burns said the swim center initially was a \$12 million project that was cut back to \$6.4 million. He said the project will continue to move forward and needs only minor planning adjustments before securing a builder.

*Additional donations may be made to the County of Santa Cruz Pool of Dreams. P.O. Box 8, Santa Cruz, Calif. 95063.*