

Bicycle races

TOUR OF CALIFORNIA

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# Santa Cruz passes on hosting Amgen race

City officials say there isn't enough staff, money to accommodate cycling event

By J.M. BROWN

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**SANTA CRUZ** — Even though Santa Cruz came out ahead financially after hosting a stop on May's Amgen Tour of California, the city has decided not to participate

in the world-class cycling event next year, a top official said.

However, the move could open the door for Capitola.

Santa Cruz Assistant City Manager Tina Shull, who led planning efforts for the Stage 3 finish line festivities, said

Tuesday that officials determined last week that Santa Cruz does not have the money or staffing to pull it off again.

The city sent a formal letter to tour organizers before last week's submittal deadline, stating that Santa Cruz would not make a bid to host the race in May 2011.

"City staff invested a lot of time that we don't have

with furloughs for the coming year," Shull said. "It was a staffing issue in part, but there is a financial risk involved. You are agreeing to invest a considerable amount. While we made it back this year, there is no guarantee that we would have in the future."

All city employees except

SEE AMGEN ON A2



Santa Cruz city leaders have decided not to host the Amgen Tour of California this year after two years as a host city.

DAN COYRO/SENTINEL FILE

## AMGEN

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police are taking a 10 percent pay cut through furloughs or equivalent measures this year. The city lost money the first time it hosted the tour in 2009, which led then-City Manager Dick Wilson to determine that hosting the race in 2010 had to be a cost-neutral proposal.

The city invested about \$190,000 in this year's event, which included police overtime costs but not other staff time spent on planning, Shull said. Santa Cruz came out ahead by \$10,000 through sponsorships, events and merchandise, but Shull said she would want to see increased community investment and volunteerism before seeing the city make a future bid.

Shull said she spent 80 percent to 90 percent of her time for weeks working on race preparation. Shull said the fact that she would not have the time to work on a 2011 race proposal, given her new role as the city's No. 2, did not factor into the decision not to pursue an Amgen bid.

Capitola City Manager Jamie Goldstein said tour officials and local fans approached him when they learned Santa Cruz would not submit a proposal. Goldstein is also concerned about whether his city of 10,000 — less than one-fifth the size of Santa Cruz — has the staff-



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL FILE

Tour of California spectators crowd the finish line in front of the Boardwalk in May.

ing to support a visit, which requires months of planning and public safety costs to close roads and handle thousands of spectators.

"The tour is interested to see if Capitola would step up," Goldstein said. "We are looking at it."

Goldstein said the Capitola City Council likely will discuss the possibility of hosting the race, which has drawn Lance Armstrong and other cycling superstars, at its Sept. 9 meeting.

Nicole Okoneski, a tour spokeswoman, did not imme-

diately respond to a request for comment about Capitola's potential candidacy. She said only that, "No decisions have been made yet on the host cities for the 2011 race."

While the tour lines up its host cities for the eight-day race May 15-22, cycling enthusiast and local businessman Matt Twisselman, who chaired the local organizing committee this past year, said cyclists will be disappointed Santa Cruz dropped out. But he said he agrees with the city's reasoning.

"Last year was very suc-

cessful; we had a fantastic day and raised more than enough money," he said. "It's just too much risk to pursue it at this time."

Mayor Mike Rotkin said he hopes Santa Cruz will once again put its name in the hat.

"It was a fun adventure for people to do for a year or two," Rotkin said. "But it's not sustainable in the long run without another funding source."

Staff writer Genevieve Bookwalter contributed to this report.