

# Soquel Avenue Bridge

## Construction Begins

Hank Myers, *Associate Civil Engineer/Design*

The first stage of the construction work for the \$8.9 million replacement of the Soquel Avenue Bridge is now underway.

The construction contract was awarded on May 5, 1997, to RGW Construction, Inc., the same firm that recently reconstructed the Water Street Bridge.

For the Soquel Avenue Bridge project, the contractor first constructed a temporary river crossing along the north side of the bridge site to provide room for construction access. Next, traffic was switched over to the south half. The north half of the bridge structure, originally constructed in 1967 as a widening project, was then demolished.

The tons of concrete rubble and steel removed from the old bridge were separated and then disposed of at a local recycling facility.

### What's Next?

Several cranes have been moved onto the site. These huge cranes will be used for the installation of new piles that will support the replacement bridge. The contractor will first extract any existing piles that are in the way. Then, the drilling operation will start for the 72 inch diameter cast-in drilled hole piles.

Once a hole is drilled—approximately 100 feet until the drilling reaches bedrock—the contractor will install a large, steel rebar cage and pump concrete into the hole with a *tremie tube*. A long steel casing and a slurry polymer will also be used to prevent collapse of the drilled hole.

This operation will be repeated for each of the 20 piles required for the north half of the replacement bridge. The drilling operation is expected to be completed in August if the work proceeds as planned.