

Watsonville, county record slight population growth

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The population of Watsonville and Santa Cruz County grew in 1993, but not by much.

The county increased 1 percent to 238,900, and Watsonville rose 1.2 percent, to 33,150, the state Department of Finance reported. Santa Cruz and Capitola grew at about half the rate of Watsonville.

The unincorporated area of the county grew 1.1 percent, slightly above the 1 percent growth rate goal set by county supervisors. In the decade of the 1980s, the county population grew 2 percent.

That tenth of a percent is nothing to worry about, said Mark Deming, a senior planner for the county. The population figures are estimates, he said, and vacant housing is counted as occupied.

Construction of new housing is low, but ahead of the pace of

last year. Through August, the county issued 125 permits for the unincorporated area, 10 less than the total for all of 1993.

In Watsonville, the city has issued 24 permits for single family homes and none for apartments this year. For all of 1993, the city issued permits for 19 apartments and nine single-family homes.

The county figures were included in agenda material for Wednesday's meeting of the county planning commission, which will recommend a growth goal for the unincorporated area. County supervisors will make the final decision.

The county has been setting a limit for building permit allocations since 1978, when voters approved Measure J, aimed at controlling urban sprawl.

But only twice in 16 years has the permit allocation been exceeded. In 1993, supervisors authorized 512 permits, nearly four times the 135 issued.

Slow growth

Area	1993	1994	Pct. Chg.
Watsonville	32,750	33,150	+ 1.1%
Santa Cruz	51,400	51,700	+ 0.6%
Capitola	10,400	10,450	+ 0.5%
Scotts Valley	9,275	9,450	+ 1.9%
Unincorporated	132,700	134,100	+ 1.1%
County total	236,600	238,900	+ 1.0%