

# City Concerned The County May Not Up Its Library Budget

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A new wave of branch library closures may hit the county hinterlands in July unless the county Board of Supervisors ignores a recommendation by its staff that it finance library service in 1979-80 only at the same level it is being financed this year.

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Librarian Charles Atkins told the Santa Cruz City Council

Thursday: "I think are cost estimates in our \$1.54 million budget for next fiscal year are extremely accurate. But the county administrative office has recommended that the county contribute just \$809,634 toward these costs, the same it is paying this year. Actually, the county's share of the cost of the proposed budget is around \$1.03 million, so they will fall \$302,000 short."

Councilman Larry Edler said that if this does indeed occur the city should close some of

the county branches. Edler noted that the council last July took a big chance and continued to fund the total library system for several months before the county came through with a budget and a library contribution.

"There is no way I want to do that again this year," Edler warned.

Vice Mayor Joe Ghio said: "Shut down July 1 if the the money is not appropriated by the county."

Councilman Michael Rotkin

took a different tack, saying there should be discussions with the supervisors to avoid closures. He said:

"I have heard rumors that the county is not happy about the library agreement and they may start a system all their own. So they have leverage, too."

Atkins said he feels sure there will be state bailout funds for the libraries, and he stressed he is opposed to closing libraries.

At the same time, Atkins warned the day of the tiny county branches is drawing to an end. He produced a table showing that it will cost \$4.50 per book circulated in the Ben Lomond branch next fiscal year, based on this year's figures (corrected to include the closure period). The Soquel circulation costs \$2.50 per book.

"We need fewer but bigger libraries to put more books into the hands of more people," Atkins said.

The city and county fund the library system jointly on a basis proportionate to the ma-

terials circulated in each jurisdiction. Next fiscal year the county will pay 67 percent of the costs, the city around 33 percent.

Atkins said he is tired of hearing that the county pays more than the city. "The payment is on the basis of circulation. There are 67 percent materials circulated in the county compared to around 33 percent in the city. At the Main Branch the circulation is 52 percent to county residents, 48 percent to city residents. So they are using more services and materials and have to pay their share under the agreement."