

Supervisors OK growth rate; plenty of permits available

By BOB SMITH
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If someone wants to start a housing boom in Santa Cruz County next year, they won't be stymied by a shortage of building permits.

Santa Cruz County supervisors set the growth rate in the unincorporated areas of the county for 1990 at 1 percent for "market rate" housing at a public hearing yesterday afternoon. That means that another 487 building permits will be available to home builders in 1990.

But the supervisors also approved a recommendation by the county planning department to allocate 1,384 permits for "affordable" housing over and above the population growth controls set by Measure J, the growth-control ordinance passed by voters 10 years ago.

The county also has a pool of 1,400 unused building permits from previous years. Altogether, there will be 3,271 residential building permits available for the county's unincorporated areas.

That's far more than were used this year in the county, supervisors were told. County planner Dave Laughlin said projections show there will be approximately 500 new homes, apartments and condominiums built in the unincorporated areas this year.

In past years, the annual setting of the county's growth rate, mandated under Measure J, attracted large numbers of people involved in the issue, one way or another. Verbal and sometimes legal battles were waged between growth-control advocates and members of the building and real estate industry.

This year, three people sat through the short hearing and no one spoke either for or against the 1-percent growth rate.

A large portion of the county's growth is now taking place inside the city limits of Santa Cruz, Watsonville and Scotts Valley.

Last year, the cities, with a combined population of 99,375, grew by 2,225, while the unincorporated area, with 130,500 residents, grew by 2,400.

"There is greater growth in the cities than in the unincorporated areas," supervisor Robley Levy said. "I think this is fairly significant because we keep getting hit over the head about what our system is doing."

"The real growth is taking place in the cities where there are the jobs."

Of the new building permits allowed for the unincorporated areas, two-thirds will be used in the urbanized area stretching from the Santa Cruz city limits through Seaside.

The remainder, 161 single-family homes, can be built in the rural areas outside the



Chip Scheuer

Builders in Santa Cruz County will find no lack of building permits available next year. Here, Rod Royal works on a new house in the Aptos foothills.

county's urban services line — generally areas where sewers are not available.

In other business, the board yesterday:

- Approved the purchase, for \$8,498.15, of five new radar sets that will be used by the California Highway Patrol to catch speeders on county roads.

- Approved an ordinance regulating parking in county parks and recreational facilities.

- Approved a \$20,760 contract with Ifland Engineers of Santa Cruz to design the Burt Scott Estate park. The work will be

paid for with money from the Eureka Canyon park dedication budget.

- Accepted an \$56,854 federal grant for alcohol-free living center services and approved a contract with Janus Alcoholism Services to develop three six-bed living centers in the county. The centers are for recovering alcoholics who have graduated from a residential recovery program but still need a supportive low-cost living environment.

- Accepted \$10,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice for the Sheriff's Office participation

in the 1989 Marijuana Eradication Campaign. The money will be transferred into the Sheriff's Special Fund and used in the annual marijuana eradication plan.

- Accepted another \$10,000 from narcotics-related forfeitures and authorized its use for the Santa Cruz County Narcotics Enforcement Team for ongoing investigations.

- Approved a \$9,454 lease to move the County Law Library from its location in the courts building to temporary quarters at 716 Ocean St., Santa Cruz.