

SV bans cigarette machines

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SCOTTS VALLEY — Joining Watsonville and the county of Santa Cruz, the city council unanimously agreed Wednesday to ban cigarette vending machines.

The measure will affect the city's six cigarette vending machines, said Acting Chief of Police Capt. Tom Bush, who presented the ordinance to the council.

The machines are now located in restaurants, bars and one gas station, Bush said.

In supporting the measure, he cited a recent study done in Watsonville showing that minors have no difficulty buy-

ing cigarettes from vending machines. In the study, a minor attempting to buy cigarettes from a series of vending machines reported a 100 percent success rate.

The measure was supported by various local health and school groups, including the County Health Services Agency and the county Public Health Commission.

Representatives said the idea is to prevent youngsters from smoking by making it harder for them to get cigarettes.

"The sad fact is that 60 percent of smokers started by the age of 14," said Janet Crawford, program director of the Santa Cruz County chapter of the

American Cancer Society. "Ninety percent ... started by the age of 19."

Opposing the measure was Robert Orcutt, a local vending machine owner who has two cigarette vending machines in the city.

Orcutt attacked the Watsonville study, calling it "conclusive but not thorough. They used one minor, who went in one convenience store and one bar."

He was challenged by LeAnne Ravinale, the tobacco education coordinator of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. Ravinale said she was one of the organizers of the December 1990 study. She said the study surveyed 10 cigarette machines in Watsonville, which was

about half the number then in the city.

The measure will return to the council for a second reading before it is finally adopted.

Cigarette machines were banned by the city of Watsonville in May and the County of Santa Cruz in June.

Tobacco educators and health officials said they plan to carry their campaign to the city of Capitola and the city of Santa Cruz.

Orcutt said later he does not intend to fight the measure. "They have their minds made up," he said. Like other vending machine owners, he said is watching the fate of pending lawsuits on the issue.