

Construction starts at new Valley school

By PAULINE HALAJIAN
Sentinel correspondent

BOULDER CREEK — Two and a half miles north of Boulder Creek, on a hillside overlooking the San Lorenzo Valley, the foundation for a new school is being laid.

The Redwood Elementary School will be the first new school to be built in the San Lorenzo Valley in 25 years. With elementary school children crowded into 30 portable classrooms in the district, the start of construction is a welcome sight.

Pupils are expected to occupy the new, 23-classroom school by January. The 35,000-square-foot school will house 650 kindergarten through fifth-grade pupils, relieving some of the overcrowding at Boulder Creek, San Lorenzo Valley and Quail Hollow elementary schools. This year, Boulder Creek Elementary has 1,200 students —

one-third more that the 750 students its permanent buildings are designed to hold.

"We had to move in eight more portable units this year," said Richard Brooks, assistant superintendent of business and personnel for San Lorenzo Valley School District.

"The 30 portable classrooms in the elementary schools are housing 900 kids," said Brooks. "Including all schools in the district, there are a total of 40 portable units occupied by 1,200 students."

Brooks said that when Redwood Elementary School opens, the district will still have the equivalent of a full school learning out of portables in the valley.

The need for the new school was realized in 1984, when projections showed a 40-percent increase in school enrollment throughout the valley over a five-year period. That

projection is now down to about 2 percent a year, said Brooks.

The \$3.4 million site preparation, including clearing and grading the land and installing retaining walls was completed last fall. Construction on the school was to begin this spring. But the bids came in over the budget allowance and the project had to be rebid. The result was six months of time lost.

"We were awarded the contract on Aug. 29," said Geoff Lightfoot, project manager for Daniels and House Construction Company of Monterey.

"The contract allows us 1½-years to finish the school, but we hope to have it done sooner."

Lightfoot said that the weather will be a big factor on the completion date.

Included in the \$11-million Redwood Elementary School will be a special education classroom, a

computer lab, a multi-purpose room, administrative buildings and a soccer field which will be available to the community.

The school was designed with all-wood exteriors and gently slop-

ing roofs to give the campus a "village" atmosphere.

"It's a nice-looking facility," said Lightfoot.

Plans are also being made for a new middle school which will be

located on a 20-acre parcel adjoining the property of the Redwood Elementary School, according to Brooks. Construction of the middle school is expected to begin in four or five years.



Ed Mumm operates a ditch digger at new Redwood Elementary school.

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