

New Santa Cruz

A Santa Ana Police lieutenant has been selected chief of the Santa Cruz Police Department.

City Manager Dick Wilson has scheduled a press conference Monday morning to formally announce the selection of John Bassett, 40, who is chief of detectives of the police department in Orange County.

The selection of an "outsider" ends months of speculation about who would be chosen to take over the reigns of the police department, which has been embroiled in controversy since six of its current or former officers

were charged with felony brutality.

Five of those officers have been ordered to stand trial and the sixth already has pleaded "no contest" to a charge of conspiracy.

Bassett replaces longtime Chief Geno Pini, who retired in April. Deputy Chief Richard Foerster has been acting chief and was one of more than 100 applicants for the job.

Candidates were screened by a four-member selection committee, which included Lionel Stoloff of the

police chief selected

Chamber of Commerce; Ray Belgard, chief of police in Watsonville; Jill Greensite, a member of the committee against violence to women, and former city councilman Bert Muhly.

Bassett could not be reached Saturday for comment on the selection. A spokesman with Santa Ana Police described him as a "good policeman" and said Bassett has been with that department since April 1965. He has headed the investigation bureau there for 4½ years, the spokesman said.

Bassett previously was an area commander of the patrol division and worked in the records department. The Santa Ana Police Department has 310 sworn officers.

Foerster said he would make no comment about the selection until after the city's formal announcement on Monday.

Sgt. Mike Dunbaugh, speaking on behalf of the Santa Cruz Police Officers Association, said: "The man will be judged on what he does. We're anxiously awaiting his (Bassett's) arrival on Monday and we're looking forward to meeting him."

RECEIVED

RECEIVED