

Live Oak To La Selva Beach

SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL
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Mid-County Fire Budgets: \$

Mid-county fire districts will spend about \$2.1 million this fiscal year, a 9 per cent increase from the \$1.9 million budgeted in 1975-76.

Salaries and benefits are the largest expenditures in the budgets of Aptos, Capitola, La Selva Beach, Live Oak and Soquel fire districts, with most districts showing a cost of living salary increases of about 6 per cent.

Districts also are faced with huge increases in workmen's compensation insurance premiums. Each district must now pay \$14.13 for every \$100 paid out in salaries and \$143 for each volunteer firefighter (see story on page 20).

Although the tax rates for special districts won't be released by the county until Aug. 31, here are estimated budgets of the mid-county fire districts:

APTOS - Aptos Fire District will operate this fiscal year with a total budget of \$789,189, up 9.1 per cent from the 1975-76 total of \$721,121.

The district plans several new innovations which account for the increase, Chief Richard Chin reports. Chin said the district is saving taxpayers \$8,000 a year by changing over to the county this year for dispatching services. The cost for the district to go through the county is about \$4,000 a year, compared to about \$12,000 a year when the district operated its own dispatching service, he said.

The district also budgeted about \$5,000 for the training of two paramedics, being the only mid-county district in the county preparing itself for a paramedic program, Chin said.

Structures and improvements are up \$13,058 because the district must replace the asphalt in the rear yard of the main station and will convert the hose tower into a drill station.

The district must also purchase first aid supplies for the paramedics and is going from a one and two channel to a four channel radio operation in anticipation of the county going over to a four channel system. The district is budgeting to buy two radios a year, Chin said.

Chin also reported the district paid off the firehouse on Bonita Drive in this year's budget. With a tax override passed for the firehouse, the tax rate was to have peaked at \$1.10 per \$100 assessed valuation this year and begin making its way down to \$1, but the rate already is down this year

to \$1.04, Chin estimated. It was \$1.07 in 1975-76.

CAPITOLA - Capitola Fire Protection District reports a budget of \$459,179 for fiscal year 1976-77, a 9.9 per cent increase over last year's budget of \$456,012.

The figure for salaries and benefits actually went down in this district from \$219,663 in 1975-76 to \$215,966 this fiscal year because the district dropped social security, with a retirement system taking its place, Chief Harold Jarvis said.

District firemen will each get a \$65 a month raise, totaling \$10,150, if the assessed valuation goes up enough to pay for it, Jarvis said. The district won't set its tax rate until it hears from the county, he added.

The 11 fulltime and one partime firemen will get new uniforms and the budget shows a clothing increase from \$2,500 last fiscal year to \$6,420 this year. Each "turnout," the uniform worn to fires, costs \$160 without the boots, Jarvis reported.

Jarvis added that the district is experiencing a large increase in fuel payments because of the increase in accident calls. The fuel increase doesn't show in the budget, he pointed out, because the district has cut down the amount of meetings attended to save gas.

"Every year calls increase dramatically. Last year we had a total of 615 calls and this year to the end of July we've had 468. The figure for all of 1974 was 489.

"More people are finding out we're able to respond to heart attacks. The biggest part in the increase has been with first aid. There's been little change in actual fire calls," Jarvis said.

LA SELVA BEACH - La Selva Beach Fire Department will begin paying for a new \$56,000 fire engine in this fiscal year's budget, Roy Johnson, fire district treasurer reported.

The engine will be ready in 18 months and will be paid off over three years, Johnson said. The payment in this fiscal year's budget is \$17,000.

The total budget amounts to \$92,300, up about 9 per cent from last fiscal year's budget of \$85,000.

Chief Al Kinslow will get a \$300 raise this year, Johnson added.

LIVE OAK - Live Oak Fire Protection District reports a total budget of \$709,193 for fiscal year 1976-77, showing an 8.4 per cent increase from last year's total of \$602,125.

Assistant Chief Harry Rowe reported that the district is buying a new pumper truck and the payments will be spread over several years. He said the district got a good interest rate on the purchase because it joined in with Soquel and Scotts Valley fire departments, who are also planning truck purchases, in securing a loan.

Most of Live Oak's expenses are the same as last year's. The tax rate is estimated at \$1.08

per \$100 assessed valuation compared with last fiscal year's rate of \$1.02.

The district plans to set aside money this year for the "dry period" from July to November when no tax money comes in and most districts have to apply to the county for a tax anticipation loan, Rowe said.

"We don't know how much longer these tax anticipation loans are going to last and the county is urging all districts to

\$2.1 Million

set money aside," he added.

The district is paying out \$485,920 in salaries and benefits this year, compared to \$432,420 last year. The district employs 21 captains and firemen and three officers.

SOQUEL - The Soquel Fire Department has budgeted \$135,000 for this fiscal year, marking a 9 per cent increase from last fiscal year's total of \$126,000, Fire Chief Ray Negro reported.

Negro and Assistant Chief Ernest Negro both received raises and salaries and benefits went from \$62,350 last year to \$66,000 this year.

The tax rate this year will be estimated at 52.7 cents per \$100 assessed valuation, compared to 47 cents last year. In 1974, the tax rate was 52 cents, Negro pointed out.

The district employs the two chiefs and has 48 volunteer firemen.

REFERENCE

APTOS BRANCH
LIBRARY
705 SOQUEL DRIVE
APTOS, CALIFORNIA 95003