County of Santa Clara Employee Newsletter

COMLINE

MAY 23, 1997

An Interview With Supervisor Don Gage

Supervisor Don Gage's philosophy comes down to one simple statement: Everyone deserves to be heard. As newly elected supervisor for District 1, he's already getting a good taste of his own beliefs. "I'm working very hard and I'm having a lot of fun," he said after his first two weeks in office.

Supervisor Gage represents his hometown of Gilroy as well as San Martin, Morgan Hill, Coyote, Los Gatos, New Almaden, Redwood Estates and parts of San Jose - all areas that are very familiar to him. Born in Gilroy in 1945, Gage graduated from Gilroy High School in 1963. He also graduated from Gavilan College with an AA degree in law enforcement and attended San Jose State University for one year.

Since that time, Gage has lived in Gilroy, where he raised three daughters and a son. He and his wife, Jeanne, are both former IBM employees. He was first elected to the Gilroy City Council in 1981, where he served 10 years as a councilman and was elected to two mayoral terms. In 1993, he received an award from the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for exceptional community service. He has also been honored as Man of the Year in Gilroy and was given a service award for outstanding contributions to the Gilroy Garlic Festival.

Comline asked Supervisor Gage to answer a few questions about his past experiences and challenges he faces as a new boardmember:

What early experiences influenced your desire to enter the field of public service ?

"I always believed if you want to effect change, you must be involved," says Gage. He became active on the Gilroy City Council in order to ensure the community "remained friendly. It's the people who really make any type of government good. I wanted to be part of that."

What past achievements are you most proud of?

His number one answer was personal service. While serving on the city council for six years, Gage knew all 200-plus city employees by their first names. He also points to his involvement on the city's Gang Task Force and the resulting Gilroy Youth Center, which offers educational tutoring and recreation for at-risk youth. "Bringing the community together during tough times was a real challenge," says Supervisor Gage. "I tried to bring back trust to government."

What are some of the most important challenges you anticipate as District 1 Supervisor?

He believes the county's fiscal deficit will be one of the hardest challenges. Welfare reform will also be significant. "We have to put a lot of effort into limiting abuse of the welfare system without hurting those who truly need help to get back on their feet." He also plans to spend time on improving the productivity of county government, making it more "user friendly."

As chair of the Housing, Land Use, Environment, and Transportation Committee, what do you most want to accomplish?

"I want to accomplish a balance between all of those areas. For instance, we need to be sensitive to the environment, but also help people get to their jobs quickly." He believes the mix of topics in this committee is just about perfect, with farming, the environment and homes. "The only thing missing from this mix is economic development, which leads to jobs," he said. Gage plans to concentrate on bringing consistency to land use requirements and making the process easy to understand for constituents.



Supervisor Don Gage

What are some of the most important issues facing the County?

Many of our most important challenges are also the most important issues. For instance, fiscal responsibility is very important to the county. Welfare reform, also, must be done correctly in order to be a benefit to our residents and the county alike. A third important issue is the balance between punishing criminals and maintaining a reasonable jail population. In his own district, Gage plans to concentrate on the Cochrane-to-Bernal stretch of US 101 to improve the commute traffic. Maintenance of Highway 85 will also be an important topic.

Is there a message you would like to give County employees?

"From what I have seen so far, County employees are incredibly hard working and dedicated. I believe that our county can serve as a model for the state in many areas. I know that if we work as a team, there's probably nothing we can't accomplish."

West Wing Gets Renovated

Employees Enjoy New Accommodations

The West Wing renovation is well underway, with a scheduled completion date in November. The $4.5 million renovation project began last summer, for the main purpose of overhauling the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system in the aging West Wing of the County Government Center at 70 West Hedding Street. Capital Projects staff members **Dawn-Marie Shoffner and John Rosenbrock** serve as Project Manager and Construction Project Manager, respectively.

In addition to overhauling the HVAC system, the project includes providing new office space for **CJIC and Pretrial Services** staff, renovating the remainder of the building to expand the **District Attorney's Office,** installing fiber optic cable, and upgrading the phone system and restrooms. The second floor had been vacant since the Public Defender's Office moved out two years ago, awaiting the much needed renovation work. The press room has been moved to Room W-100, behind the Issac Newton Senter Room.

Both CJIC and Pretrial Services vacated leased space when they moved into the first floor of the West Wing early this year. The 26-member CJIC staff and 36-member Pretrial Services staff celebrated their move with an Open House celebration on May 15th.

The District Attorney's Office now occupies the second through the seventh floors of the West Wing, providing space for about 300 D.A. employees. Approximately 100 DA

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CalPERS Long Term Care Program

California public employees, teachers, retirees, and their spouses, parents and parents-in-law are eligible for this important program, but you must apply by **June 30, 1997.**

Long-term care is the personal care people need due to an accident, chronic illness or disability. It is expensive and isn't covered by your health insurance or Medicare. An unforeseen long-term care need can quickly and dramatically drain retirement savings. No one likes to think that they will need long-term care, but the sad reality is that many of us will need it. Long-term care isn't just a concern for older people. Accidents and disability can occur at any age. Long-term care needs are best met when they are planned for.

The CalPERS Program provides high quality care, comprehensive coverage, reasonable cost, and easy enrollment. It is a voluntary plan with premiums that cost, on average, 30% less than comparable long-term care plans you could buy on your own. Now, it's an even better value than before because your benefit payments are totally tax free, and your premiums may be tax deductible.

The 1997 application period for the CalPERS Long-Term Care Program ends on June 30th. Please plan to attend one of the following Employee Workshops for valuable information on this important program as well as to receive enrollment forms.

Employee Workshops

Location	Date	Time
Valley Medical Center, Cafeteria Conference Room	6/6/97	8:00 am
Valley Medical Center, Cafeteria Conference Room	6/6/97	4:00 pm
70 W. Hedding, Lower Level Conference Room	6/6/97	10:30 am
Social Services Auditorium	6/4/97	1:30 am
Sheriff's Office Auditorium	6/4/97	6:30 pm
Sheriff's Office Auditorium	6/5/97	11:30 am
Sheriff's Office Auditorium	6/5/97	4:00 pm
70 W. Hedding, Lower Level Conference Room	6/6/97	8:30 am

Home Composting Education Program News

Master Composter Volunteers Needed!

*The **Home Composting Education Program** for Santa Clara County (HCEP) has completed a skills survey audit of all 74 Master Composters certified in the county since 1995. In order to better use the unique talents of these volunteers, they were surveyed in ten major categories. A surprising result of the survey was that the program now has the capability to teach home composting in at least twelve languages! The survey also pointed out the need for a volunteer to provide signing (Ameslan) for classes of hearing impaired individuals. If you are interested in providing this skill, contact the program at 299-4147.*

*For the last three years Master Composters have conducted free community composting workshops for adults, and a school outreach program which teaches worm composting to children. HCEP is now recruiting interested candidates for the fall **Master Composting Training Class**, to be held **August 27 through October 29**. Call the number above if you are interested.*

*The HCEP program also announces that its office has moved from the U.C. Cooperative Extension space to the **Agricultural Commissioner's Office** in Building 1 on Berger Drive. In a program restructuring, **Ken Kelly and Sarah Smith** have assumed co-director roles under supervision from the Solid Waste Commission.*

Public Service Recognition Week

Public employees were recognized across the nation by the President's Council on Management Improvement and the Public Employees Roundtable, during **Public Service Recognition** Week from **May** 5-11,1997. Locally, the Board of Supervisors adopted a proclamation in recognition of the dedication and commitment shown by our Santa Clara County employees. Congratulations to all of you!

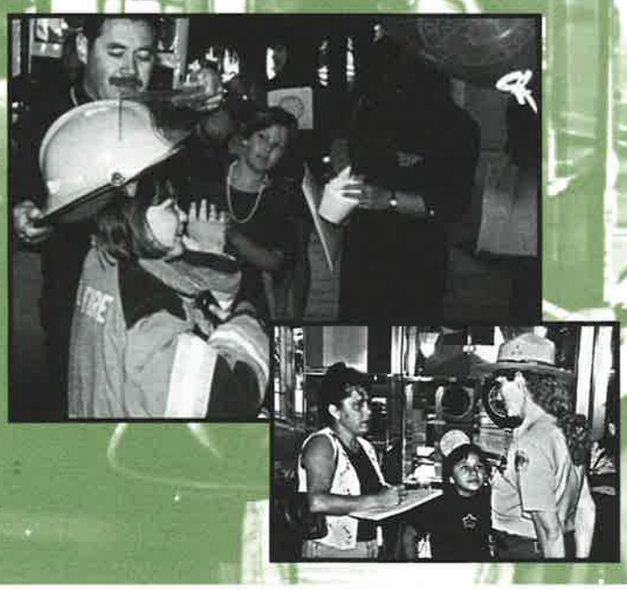
Bomb Threat Evacuation Procedures

On April 17, a bomb threat forced the evacuation of the East Wing of the County Government Center at 70 West Hedding Street. The **County Bomb Threat Assessment Team**, which consists of high level management personnel in the building, wishes to commend all of the employees involved for the exemplary manner in which the building was evacuated. Special thanks go to the **Emergency Response Team (ERT)** members from each floor, for their assistance in handling the evacuation and for searching the building before other employees re-entered the building. San Jose police also assisted the Bomb Threat Assessment Team in determining when to allow all employees to come back into the building.

Comline would like to take this opportunity to remind employees of these standard evacuation procedures:

- Evacuate immediately upon hearing the alarm, unless you are instructed to first search your area quickly for any suspicious packages, briefcases, etc. Report them to an ERT member immediately.
- Know your evacuation route. Hedding Street East Wing employees should ask their ERT members in advance which of the two stairwells to use, in order to ensure that both stairwells are used equally.
- Remain calm and do not push anyone in the stairwell.
- Remember to keep moving, keeping in mind that employees evacuating on the floors above you have a longer route to travel. Seconds count when evacuating away from danger! Slower moving traffic should walk on the right hand side, allowing faster moving traffic to pass on the left hand side.
- ERT members will remain with any disabled employees or clients until foot traffic is sparse enough to either assist them downstairs or to wait with them on the stairwell landing until help arrives.
- Assemble at the designated meeting place in the employee parking lot. Check in with your floor's designated person.

"Take Our Daughters To Work Day"



*On April 24th, the **Board of Supervisors**, County **Executive Richard Wittenberg** and Deputy County Executive **Peter Kutras**, Jr. welcomed over 200 daughters and guests of County employees during **"Take Our Daughters To Work Day."** Municipal Court Judge **Rise Pichon** was the Mistress of Ceremonies. **Manuelita Cassillas** of the Employee Services Agency coordinated this special day.*

This is the second year a Countywide program was offered to employees and their guests. The morning program gave an opportunity to meet female role models in County government and to practice interviewing skills for obtaining information about possible career choices. Many daughters then spent the rest of the day accompanying their parents at their job site.

GOOD NEWS FOR

Deferred Compensation Plan

In August, President Clinton signed into law a Small Business Tax/Minimum Wage Increase bill, which contains several important provisions related to our deferred compensation plan.The provisions took effect January 1st, except where noted. Here is a list of the changes and how they impact our plan.

• **Assets Protected** - The County protects deferred compensation funds by placing them in a trust.That way, the money will be used exclusively for plan participants and their beneficiaries. In the case of an employer bankruptcy, as in Orange County, funds would be protected from the County's creditors.

• **Greater Maximum Contributions** - You can now contribute more money each year to your deferred compensation account.The annual maximum contribution - now at $7,500 - will increase in $500 increments based on changes in the Consumer Price Index. (It is expected that the increase of the contribution limit to $8,000 will not occur until 1998.)The contribution maximum will not be raised to equal the private sector 401(k) limit.

• **Increased Withdrawal Flexibility** - The new law gives you a little more flexibility in two ways:

1) You have 30 days from your separation from the County to decide when to withdraw your money. Under the old arrangement, you could not change your mind; however, you can now make a one-time change to a later date.

2) The new law allows one-time employer or employee-initiated distributions of accounts with balances of $3,500 or less that have been inactive (not received contributions) for at least two years.

For more information, contact ESA **Benefits Administration at 299-2508.**

WELLNESS FAIR

PARTNERS IN HEALTH

Come on out to the lawn area between the County and City of San Jose buildings in the Civic Center to participate in the **Wellness Fair on June** 4 from 11:00 am to 2:30 pm. The **County Employee Wellness Program** has teamed up with the City to present an event guaranteed to offer something for everybody!

Activities will include: live music; mini massages; demonstrations of self defense; vision, blood pressure and nutrition screenings; body fat testing; color analysis; fitness and recreational information, and much more! Free food samples, giveaways and lots of valuable information will be offered by over 90 vendors—you'll be energized by their enthusiasm!

WIN PRIZES! Fill out the coupon below and place it in the raffle box at one of the event information tables, or pony mail it to the Employee Wellness Program at 70 West Hedding Street, 8th Floor East.

Please carpool or take public transportation to the Fair as parking is limited. We'll see you on the lawn! Call 299-4116 for more information.

CUT HERE

WIN! • RAFFLE! • WIN! • RAFFLE!

PARTNERS IN HEALTH

County of Santa Clara &
City of San José
WELLNESS FAIR



June 4th • 11:00 am - 2:30 pm
On the lawn between the City & County Buildings

River Rafting Trip • Restaurant Gift Certificates • T-shirts • Cookbooks • Massage • Monterey Bay Aquarium Tickets • Fitness Book and much, much more!!!

To enter, complete the information below, drop in raffle box at Fair.

NAME DEPARTMENT PHONE

WIN! • RAFFLE! • WIN! • RAFFLE!

applause

A tremendous round of applause from **Jose Villarreal,** Public Defender and Chair of the **1996 Combined Giving Campaign,** for every employee who contributed so generously to the campaign. We collected $211,903, a 7.8% increase over 1995! Once again, Santa Clara County employees have demonstrated their caring and commitment to assist in the delivery of services to people with special needs within our community.

General Services Agency employees earned the Second Harvest Food Bank GOLD Award for their contribution of food to the needy during the 1996 holiday season. The food drive, which originated in the **Data Processing Department,** has seen a dramatic increase in the amount of food donated over the past few years, from 195 lbs. in 1994 to 20,700 lbs. last year. The five GSA departments competed to see which could contribute the most pounds of food per employee. Congratulations to the **Facilities Department** for coming in first! Special recognition goes to GSA department team captains **Mary Ann Cathcart, Lorraine Leipold, Donna Culbertson, Shan Wolfram, Karen Hall, Bernice Smith, Theresa Rabe and Leslie Ann Stinson.** Although still several months away, GSA is already planning its strategy for this year's food drive, with the goal of exceeding the per capita contribution of any other County agency or department. If you are interested in participating in a Countywide competition, contact **Gary Aslanian at 299-3611** for further information.

GSA Communications announced the recent retirement of Chief Communications Technician **Bill von Waaden,** after over 37 1/2 years with the County. Bill managed the technical service section that maintains the systems used for emergency dispatching of County Sheriff, fire and paramedic units. He was instrumental in implementing the pioneering, state-of-the-art technology which has always distinguished the County Communications Center. The department will miss his experience and dedication to service, and sends him best wishes for a well deserved retirement.

The **Roads and Airports Department** announces that **Bill Baxter,** Branch Manager for Traffic and Electrical Operations, and **Masoud Abarzadeh,** Traffic Engineer, have been honored by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) with a request to read their prepared papers at the ITE Conference in July. Bill's paper discusses the implementation of intelligent transportation systems and equipment within the County, and Masoud's paper discusses traffic safety management. Roads staff is often singled out by national organizations to report on the County's creative and successful management of its unique expressway and road system.

Congratulations are in order for **Kimberly Faraday,** Economic Development Officer of **Intergovernmental Relations,** County Executive's Office. After earning recognition from the local chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution as its "Outstanding Junior Member" earlier this year, she recently became the "California State Winner." This honor is in recognition of the many hours of exemplary volunteer service Kimberly has dedicated to the community. She attended several events honoring the Society's winners at its national meeting in Washington D.C. last April.

Staff members of the **Integrated Waste Management and Pollution Prevention Programs** recently named **Andrea Rosales** the first-ever "Paper Miser" for her creativity in reducing office waste. Her award was a hat made entirely from waste paper, of course! Andrea takes waste reduction far beyond mere support of the paper recycling program and continues to suggest new waste reduction ideas. She encourages everyone to print drafts on the unused side of waste paper, reuses mailing envelopes, reminds employees to make two-sided copies of documents, and purchases items made with recycled content. Call 441-1198 for a copy of "Tips for Office Waste Prevention" or to share your own Paper Miser's tips!

News to Use

• The **County Executive's Office of Budget and Analysis** has published the *Fiscal Year 1997 County Government Handbook* - a reference guide to the structure and operation of Santa Clara County government. Copies are available for review at all branches of the **County Library** system, and also in the **Records Division of the Office of the Clerk of Board** on the 10th floor of W. Hedding Street. The document is also available on the County's "home page" on the World Wide Web (http://claraweb.co.santa.ca.us). This reference guide describes all of the agencies, departments and major programs, as well as the diverse range of services provided to the 1.6 million residents of the County. Current challenges facing the County are also discussed in this document.

• Are you interested in finding out which athletic clubs give discounts to County employees? Call the **Employee Wellness Program at 299-4116** to request a current listing.

• Several Public Employee Training Institute (PETI) classes were offered by the **Employee Wellness Program** this spring. The following two classes are upcoming, and will be held at 70 W. Hedding Street. Call 299-4116 for more information.

Your Health Report (2 sessions)	Video Display Terminals—
May 28 & June 11	Preventing Injuries
10 am-12 pm	June 12, 9 am-12 pm

• **Autumn Wonderland-YMCA Preschool** is now accepting applications for child care. Summer program vacancies are also being accepted. Located at the Santa Clara County Housing Authority on Julian and Autumn Streets, the center accepts children 21/2 to 6 years old for full and part time care. Housing Authority, County and City of San Jose employees receive priority placement. Limited financial assistance is available for qualifying families. For more information, contact Director **Michelle Ginthner at 298-3517.**

"Renovation" from page 1

investigators have been temporarily moved to Timothy Drive for one year, to allow space for further phases of the renovation project. **Elizabeth Sanchez Clark,** Public Information Officer for the District Attorney's Office is now located on the second floor. The public information phone number is 729-2504.

The employees involved are enthusiastic about their new office space, and many have gone above and beyond the scope of their usual jobs to provide for a successful move and a more pleasant environment. The CJIC Office has provided the entire West Wing with a biweekly newsletter to keep all affected employees up to date with ongoing construction issues, edited by **Anne Gendron-Thompson,** CJIC Administrative Lead. **Bill Larsen,** Assistant District Attorney, spent countless hours coordinating the renovation of the D.A.'s office space, and was even spotted cleaning the windows of the new offices during non-working hours before staff moved into the second floor. **Peter Waite,** Deputy District Attorney, has teamed up with **Maria Gaura** of the San Francisco Chronicle, a member of the press room, to design and plant the median area between the West Wing parking lot and the main entrance to the West Wing. **County Grounds Maintenance** provided the plants and had the trees planted. Peter and Maria then completed the planting and now provide regular maintenance. Since their move into the West Wing, CJIC staff **Kate Pitka and Dat Nguyen** have assisted them. The West Wing employees are grateful to the **GSA Custodial, Communications and Data Processing Services** employees who have done a wonderful job of providing much needed services during the renovation.

From the Editor

The next submission deadline is June 9. Send your Comline items to Editor Katie Ryan via PONY (County Executive's Office, 70 W. Hedding St., 11th floor), fax (295-1613), or phone (299-3800 ext. 7026).

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