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ADMINISTRATIVE SPENDING DOWN

People-To-People Services Focus Of County Budget

This year's Santa Clara County budget emphasizes people-to-people services, a hold-the-line approach to costs and a significant reduction of adminstrative spending.

It also reflects a shift in political attitudes by several members of the board of supervisors, and some changing priorities.

Funds for the county's centralized computer network and building maintenance were heavily slashed, as was the budget for the finance department.

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However, public health services came out virtually unaffected and, in a period of austerity, supervisors kept their promise to the Sheriff's department and provided funds for 101 new deputies.

Supervisor Geraldine Steinberg has played a pivotal role in budget a reviewing.

Following her appointment to the board in 1974, she was the swing vote in many 3-2 decisions, wavering between her liberal North County constituency and the area's high-income and heavily-taxed homeowners.

But following her successful campaign for election this spring, and after long discussions with ired taxpayers, she came to the two-week budget hearings determined to save money.

She was usually unyielding on social services spending and led an unsuccessful attack against the alcoholism services program.

Supervisor Dom Cortese, who was re-elected by a narrow margin this spring, shifted on several

budget decreased by about $900,000.

Supervisors Dan McCorquodale and Sig Sanchez maintained their consistent positions at opposite ends of the political arena.

In almost every case where spending cuts were suggested, Sanchez either broached the idea or supported it.

McCorquodale warned at the outset of budget hearings that he intended to cut what he called middle management administrative fat.

He fully supported county health and welfare programs.

The county executive's fiscal analysts have warned consistently that heavy reductions in almost all departments will seriously hamper services.

Supervisors expressed skepticism that this will happen and said they will keep a close watch on constituents' reactions.

For one example, despite an across-the-board hiring freeze, which has resulted in elimination of an estimated 225 vacant jobs, supervisors responded to citizens' complaints by giving an additional technician to the criminalistics laboratory to speed up the issuance of death certificates.

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