



County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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PRESS RELEASE

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVES 2016-17 BUDGET

Following a more than a week of public hearings, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday unanimously approved a \$696 million budget that supports critical services such as public safety and health care while demonstrating financial prudence and sound fiscal policy.

The 2016-17 Budget increases public safety funding, improves substance abuse and mental health services, expands economic opportunity, protects the environment and more. The budget also continues the County's long recovery from the Great Recession by building up rainy day funds.

"I'm pleased that the Budget reflects the Board's priorities," Board of Supervisors Chair Bruce McPherson said. "We have emphasized public safety, health care, economic opportunity and fiscal prudence; continued to limit budget growth and improved budget reserves; and added funds for youth and homeless services."

The Budget moves the County closer to a Board-established goal of a 10 percent general fund rainy day reserve to safeguard against future economic downturns, which many experts predict within the next few years. The policy recently helped the County achieve an improved credit rating from Standard & Poor's.

"Overall, the County is beginning to see positive indicators across the board, a strong sign that we are on the right path. By continuing to invest in technology, infrastructure and our residents, we will continue seeing returns that improve the quality of life for everyone," Supervisor Zach Friend said.

While representing a decline in spending and overall funded positions from the prior year, the 2016-17 Budget does include funding for several new positions, including staff



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to address homelessness and community mental health, as well as a coordinator to establish a Multidisciplinary Interview Center (MDIC) for child crime victims through the District Attorney's Office.

“We took a thoughtful approach to our Budget that reflects our community values, including being resourceful with how we spend taxpayer dollars. When we chose to invest, we did so for programs and projects that have demonstrated success and are designed to get results,” Supervisor Ryan Coonerty said.

The Budget includes funding for continued parks improvements and two new deputy sheriff positions. The Board also added funding toward providing free postage on vote-by-mail ballots to further improve voter turnout, as well as for two additional probation officers to monitor moderate- to high-risk offenders and domestic violence offenders.

“The County should appropriately monitor and ensure that the perpetrators of domestic violence comply with court orders requiring them to get treatment and to stay away from victims. We hope and expect this will lead to a reduction of violence against women,” Supervisor Greg Caput said.

The budget also added funding for arts and community programs, including (but not limited to) the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, Arts Council Santa Cruz County, Pajaro Valley Shelter Services and YouthSERVE, a program of the Santa Cruz Volunteer Center pairing youths who want to donate their time and energy with a meaningful opportunity to do so.

“The County continues to strengthen the foundation for success in Santa Cruz County. We added resources to build our public safety infrastructure, support economic drivers and protect the most vulnerable in our community,” Supervisor John Leopold said.

The County's budget is comprised of 131 separate funds which are used to finance a variety of County services, including fire protection, road maintenance, parks and more. The largest fund, the General Fund, is \$470 million.

The County Budget is available at: http://sccounty01.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/prop_budget2016-17/Proposed_Budget_2016-2017.pdf