

New Report Shows that While Santa Cruz County is Making Many Positive Strides, Residents Continue to Struggle

Watsonville, CA- The 16th addition of the award-winning **Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project (CAP)** report, sponsored by the United Way and conducted by Applied Survey Research, shows that while median home prices and family incomes in Santa Cruz County are increasing, the economic downfall continues to have a negative effect on residents. The report, contains a survey of more than 850 Santa Cruz County residents and several indicators to measure quality of life. The findings, show that while **unemployment has decreased slightly from 11.3% in 2009 to 11% in August 2010**, it was 5.6% in 2000. **About 50%** of Santa Cruz County residents paid more than 30% of their take home wages on rent and housing costs in 2009. Last year nearly **16% of survey respondents said they lived without basic necessities**; this figure increased 10% since 2007. When asked what basic needs people were lacking, **62% said health care, 26% said food, and 22% said rent/housing. Notices of default** (the first step in the foreclosure process) have **increased 489%** in Santa Cruz County from 279 in 2005 to 1,643 in 2009.

These are a few of the findings in this year's report:

- Property values are increasing but more home owners are receiving notices of default.
- While telephone survey respondents said they were less concerned about family violence than in previous years, domestic violence calls reported by the Capitola Police Department have increased more than 80% from 2002 to 2009. Domestic violence calls reported by the Santa Cruz Police Department increased 39% during the same years.
- The rate of substantiated child abuse has consistently decreased since 2000, hitting the lowest rate in 2009.
- Juvenile misdemeanor and felony drug arrests for narcotics and other dangerous drugs have decreased since 2002 yet juvenile misdemeanor and felony drug arrests for marijuana have increased more than 50% during the same years.
- Alcohol outlets per 1,000 people in Santa Cruz County have remained consistent at 2.4, while in the city of Santa Cruz the rate was 19.0 per 1,000 people and 21.7 per 1,000 people in the unincorporated area in 2009.
- Santa Cruz County experienced a decrease in total number of beach posting: 39 postings in 2009, down from 115 in 2008.

"The CAP provides a snap-shot of life in the county; it tells us what's working and what's not. With the changing economy in Santa Cruz County, it is now more important than ever to have data that helps us understand not only what's changing in our community but how that change effects our community members," said Mary Lou Goeke, Executive Director, United Way of Santa Cruz County.

To find out more, come to the Press Conference and celebration of the Santa Cruz County 2010 Community Heroes. Over 30 individuals will be celebrated for improving the quality of life in Santa Cruz County. In addition, new community goals for the year 2015 will be announced.

A light lunch will be served:

**Monday, November 22, 2010
10:00 am
University Inn & Conference Center
611 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060**