

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

The Honorable Board of Supervisors and
the Grand Jury of
County of Santa Cruz, California

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the discretely presented component unit, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the County of Santa Cruz, California, (the "County") as of and for the year ended June 30, 2004, which collectively comprise the County's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents. These financial statements are the responsibility of the County's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and the significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the discretely presented component unit, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the County of Santa Cruz, California, as of June 30, 2004, and the respective changes in financial position and cash flows, where applicable, thereof for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated November 19, 2004, on our consideration of the County's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grants. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and should be read in conjunction with this report in considering the results of our audit.

The management's discussion and analysis; the schedule of funding progress; and the budgetary comparison schedules are not a required part of the basic financial statements but are supplementary information required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. We have applied certain limited procedures, which consisted primarily of inquiries of management regarding the methods of measurement and presentation of the required supplementary information. However, we did not audit the information and do not express an opinion on it.

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise the County's basic financial statements. The introductory section, combining and individual fund financial statements and schedules, statistical section, and glossary are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements. The combining and individual fund financial statements and schedules have been subjected to the auditing procedures applied by us in the audit of the basic financial statements and, in our opinion, based on our audit, are fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole. The introductory, statistical, and glossary sections have not been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, accordingly, we express no opinion on them.

Vargas and Company
San Jose, California
November 19, 2004