



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

SUSAN A. MAURIELLO, J.D., COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Jason Hoppin  
Communications Manager  
831-454-3401

### BOARD SELECTS NEW COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors is pleased to announce the selection of Carlos J. Palacios as the next County Administrative Officer.

Mr. Palacios, 55, is a 25-year resident of Santa Cruz County, has extensive ties to the community and represents the first Latino executive officer in the County's 167-year history. He currently serves as Assistant County Administrative Officer.

"With a dedicated staff and solid financial foundation, Santa Cruz County is poised to reach the next level of excellence," Mr. Palacios said. "I look forward to the challenges ahead as we work with the Board and the community to improve the quality of life for all County residents."

Mr. Palacios will oversee an annual budget \$720 million and staff of 2,400 that provides a range of services to the Santa Cruz County community, including public safety and emergency preparation, health care and social services, road maintenance, environmental protection, agricultural and economic development and more.

"Carlos is the clear choice to lead us into the future," County Board Chair John Leopold said. "He brings both a fresh vision and a deep understanding of Santa Cruz County, including where it has been and where it needs to go."

As Assistant CAO, Mr. Palacios helped establish the Homeless Coordinator position, Economic Development Division and Cannabis Licensing Division, and negotiated a joint powers authority agreement for Monterey Bay Community



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Power. He also oversaw revisions to the County Budget document to improve transparency and accessibility.

A graduate of the University of Albuquerque and Princeton University, Mr. Palacios previously served as City Manager for the City of Watsonville between 1996-2015. While there, he established a strategic planning process for city government, helped develop the Civic Plaza Building and promoted downtown revitalization, championed water and solid waste recycling projects, made the city into an attractive destination for businesses and jobs and provided miles of trails around city wetlands.

"Carlos is a man of exceptional character and integrity," said Geoffrey Dunn, a local author, historian and filmmaker. "His selection not only marks a milestone in Latino political influence at the highest levels of County government, but he is a gifted and compassionate administrator who will serve the people of Santa Cruz County well. It's wonderful to have someone at the top who reflects the diversity of our community."

Mr. Palacios is currently a member of the Cabrillo College Foundation Board of Directors, having served as president in 2009. He is a member of the Santa Cruz County Community Foundation Board of Directors. He previously served in various capacities with the League of California Cities, was a founding member and co-chair of Action Pajaro Valley, and was a 10-year member of the United Way Community Assessment Project Steering Committee.

He was also named Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce Man of the Year in 2006, received a Civic Entrepreneur Award from the Irvine Foundation in 2005, an Exceptional Leadership Award from the League of California Cities in 2002, and the Latino Chamber of Commerce President's Award in 1999.

Mr. Palacios is a resident of Watsonville, where he lives with his fiancée. He has one child.

***\*Mr. Palacios and Chair Leopold will be available for interviews after 1 p.m. Please call Jason Hoppin to schedule an appointment.***