

# Verizon, Can You Hear Us NOW?

by Rachel Wooster

Last Sunday eight Boulder Creek residents took time out of their busy lives to protest in front of Verizon's store in downtown Santa Cruz. Why did they do this? Haven't they already won? Well, no, actually they have not. The application has been shelved but Verizon can come back at any time and have another hearing and get it approved.

So why are these citizens so concerned about this application? Well it all boils down to location. That's right, these citizens aren't anti-cell tower, just anti-location. They have even given Verizon an extensive list of alternative locations such as the water tank

complex off of Madrone and Big Basin Highway. This location, unlike the proposed one, would be out of sight and on higher ground giving it greater coverage area. Another location is at the existing cell tower site on Rebecca



Drive, which for some reason Verizon didn't even know about. Just shows how hard they really were looking for a good location that would serve the citizens of Boulder Creek.

There are other concerns, including the county codes that are being waived for this location. They include a 300-foot setback for residential zoned parcels (this includes five parcels), scenic corridor protections, and requirements for co-location. Then there are the sections of our town plan that are being ignored. Our town plan says service equipment, including satellite dishes, shall be located away from streets and screened from view. It says that no commercial impacts "spill over" to the res-

idential areas. That maximum height from commercial structures is 25 feet, and last but not least, that noise levels from commercial activity may not exceed 45 decibels at the property perimeter. The proposed cell tower with its generator would be 64 decibels at the property perimeter which is right next to our dentist office.

So why hasn't the county just denied this application? Why has it been dragged out for four hearings and then shelved? That would be because two of those hearings were continued because Verizon requested so per their lawyers (yes Verizon has already gotten their lawyers involved). So who do you think has more money, Verizon or Santa Cruz county? If you even have to think about that you have not been

**CONT. ON PAGE 15**

December 2013

www.mountainbulletin.com

Page 3

## VERIZON CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

paying attention. Corporations have been flaunting their power like crazy lately and even declared themselves people per our Supreme Court. So instead of denying Verizon's application, our county, along with many others, is waiting for Verizon to withdraw the application and move on.

But what is the big deal if Verizon has a few denied applications? Why do they care if it is denied anyway? Well that is where the lawyers come in. See in court, cases are decided on precedence (prior decisions). If this application was denied, its denial could be used in other court cases that are currently pending all over the country by other citizens, school boards, and counties. Verizon's goal in bullying Santa Cruz and many other counties all over our wonderful country is to control both sides of the argument in court so they have the winning hand.

With last Sunday's protest, these citizens were delivering a message to Verizon that they are not going away. They are not going to be ignored, and if Verizon continues pushing the matter, they are going to make noise. Protests done in the right way can get national attention and that is something Verizon does not want this application to get. This application has not gotten national attention yet, but if it goes on long enough it almost certainly will. Especially since the proposed location is at the gateway to "Big Basin Redwood State Park," California's first official state park.