

# Effects of changes to board yet to be seen

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By CHRIS NICHOLS

Although two new members will join Calaveras County's Board of Supervisors in January, several county leaders and residents expect no major shift in board politics.

But some are curious about how the new leaders will fare.

District 2 voters Tuesday elected Steve Wilensky, a Glencoe apple farmer and former union leader. Replacing incumbent Paul Stein, who did not run for a third term, Wilensky will represent Glencoe, West Point, Mountain Ranch, Railroad Flat, Mokelumne Hill and Sheep Ranch.

Also joining the board as District 1 supervisor is Bill Claudino. A long-time county resident and retired California Highway Patrol officer, Claudino ran unopposed in the March primary.

Replacing Supervisor Lucy Thein of San Andreas, who decided not to seek re-election, Claudino will represent San Andreas, Valley Springs, Paloma, Campo Seco, La Contenta, Camanche, Burson and Wallace.

Most current board members have tended toward fiscally and socially conservative policies. But some feel Wilensky will add a more progressive or liberal voice to the mix.

"Steve thinks outside the box," said Supervisor Merita Callaway, who represents Ebbetts Pass. "He has a lot of good ideas and I do think Steve will bring a brand new perspective to the board and I look forward to that."

In his District 2 race against Mountain Ranch attorney David Studley, Wilensky campaigned on a platform for "sensible growth," one that he said would limit the development of large subdivisions in the county.

He pledged to improve communication between and within county departments and involve more of the general public in the political process.

A 17-year-county resident, Wilensky added that he hoped to build bonds with each of the existing supervisors.

"I hope they will come to feel comfortable with me," said Wilensky at his victory celebration in San Andreas Tuesday night. "I expect to have a good working relationship with all of them. We can disagree without being disagreeable."

Planning Commissioner Michael Dell'Orto, a former supervisor and Studley supporter, said he expects that Wilensky will both bring a new perspective to the board and will recommend "some significantly different appointees" to county committees than had Stein.

Claudino described himself as "probably more conservative" than his predecessor. Claudino, who moved to San Andreas from San Mateo County in 1968, said he would take a fiscally conservative approach to budget issues and work to protect individual property rights.

He said he "welcomed" new developments, as long as builders pay their share of impact fees. He cited the Valley Springs Benefit Basin — a recently approved program that will charge developers \$1,275 for each new home built — as a way to ensure the county has funds to pay for road wear.

"It's a valid tool and I was in favor of that," he said.

Claudino said he hoped to present an alternative version of the furlough plan county officials enacted this summer as a cash-saving measure. Supervisors approved five mandatory days off for most county employees.

Instead of forcing workers to take days off and leaving the general public without services, Claudino said he would rather keep workers on the job and pay them back when funds become available.

Still, Callaway added, no one knows for sure how Claudino and Wilensky will vote when confronted with difficult issues on the board. She called Claudino a political "unknown."

Thein, on the other hand, said she had complete confidence in both new supervisors, adding that the county would be "in good hands."

Several residents said they hoped the new supervisors will help find solutions for the county but reserved judgment on how the two will fare.

"As we vote for people, we don't know how they're going to turn out," said 87-year-old Eve Garcia of West Point, who voted for Wilensky.

Dell'Orto added that no matter the politics of either men, the board will not see a massive change overnight.

"These are five people with oars trying to move an aircraft carrier," he said. "They can row real hard but they can't move that fast. That's government."

Contact Chris Nichols at [cnichols@uniondemocrat.com](mailto:cnichols@uniondemocrat.com)