

# Federal officials visit East Palo Alto

*Partnerships in future programs are discussed*

Representatives of almost a dozen federal agencies met with East Palo Alto city officials Friday morning in a first-ever local federal summit meeting, designed to find ways in which the agencies can help the city.

The meeting was organized by U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, and former San Francisco Mayor Art Agnos, now a Housing and Urban Development official in the Clinton administration. The public and the media were not allowed to sit in on the meeting.

Eshoo said this was the first time all the federal agencies got together in the same meeting with officials from one city.

City and federal officials said the private meeting was a chance for city officials to become familiar with federal programs and for regional federal officials to learn about the city's needs.

Mayor Rose Jacobs Gibson and Vice Mayor Sharifa Wilson said the meeting probably will generate many follow-up meetings with specific agencies on different subjects.

"We're trying to spread the word on what we've been doing and trying to define ways where there can be a partnership," Wilson said.

"It was an extremely upbeat meeting," Gibson said. "They were able to see East Palo Alto for themselves."

Eshoo, who helped coordinate the meeting, said the idea grew out of efforts that she and Agnos made last summer to qualify East Palo Alto as a federal enterprise zone. Agnos is the HUD secretary's representative for the Pacific states and Hawaii. That effort failed, "but we decided we should really sit down and talk more," Eshoo said. And then came the idea to involve as many federal agencies as possible.

Besides HUD, other agencies that were represented at the meeting were Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, the Environmental Protection Agency, the

Department of Transportation, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Education, the Economic Development Administration, and the United States Attorney.

"There were a lot of expertise and resources in the room," Eshoo said.

In addition to city officials, a half-dozen community agencies and groups were also represented.

"This was not about handouts," Eshoo said. "It was about building partnerships. The city was able to show what they've been doing."

Eshoo said local officials too often don't know who federal officials are and how their agencies can help. ■

—Don Kazak

GOVERNMENT

# Legislators defend USGS

*Eshoo, Mineta rip GOP's plan to abolish Survey at Menlo Park hearing*

Representatives Anna Eshoo and Norm Mineta, joined by experts from the private sector and academia, sharply criticized a Republican proposal to eliminate the U.S. Geological Survey Friday.

Eshoo said the USGS budget represents only four one-hundredths of a percent of the nation's \$1.4 trillion budget.

"The USGS is the lead federal agency on seismic safety and water resources. It plays a key role in earthquake preparedness, seismic research, flood control and water quality monitoring," said Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, at the special hearing held in Menlo Park.

"In California—where it sometimes seems that earthquakes, floods, droughts and forest fires have unofficially become our four seasons—we have learned hard lessons about the importance of such geological studies and the need to use them in order to help avoid serious loss of life and property."

Private seismologists, earthquake safety engineers, a Stanford University geology professor and representatives from Bay Area business and environmental groups, among others, all gathered in the Menlo Park City Council chambers Friday afternoon to testify to the invaluable and