

City manager is confident he'll get help

By Thomas G. Keane
Times Tribune staff

East Palo Alto City Manager Fred Howell said recently he will have six city department heads working in the Municipal Services Center by October.

The process of hiring his staff has taken a great deal of time and effort, but Howell believes his plan will be effective in bringing "real quality people" to handle top government positions.

The 1st Appellate Court in San Francisco jeopardized the city's existence recently by calling 106 incorporation election votes into question, but that has not affected the field of candidates or their attitudes about working for East Palo Alto, the city manager said.

Howell said the court ruling seems "not at all" a factor in the hiring process thus far.

He said approximately 250 candidates applied for the six department head positions. Of them, only one has withdrawn, but Howell said there was "no indication" that that candidate, a prospective police chief from Mendocino, had resigned because of pending litigation.

The following are the six positions that will be filled by October and their accompanying salary ranges:

- Police chief: \$34,200-\$41,800.
- Public works director: \$34,200-\$41,800.
- Community development di-

rector: \$32,400-\$39,600.

- Assistant to the city manager/finance director: \$28,800-\$35,200.

- Community services director: \$27,000-\$33,000.

Howell said the number of candidates has already been screened to between 85-100 by analyzing resumes.

Last week, several panels of professionals from the Bay Area interviewed those candidates and were expected to forward the strongest prospects for next week's interviews. For instance, the candidates for police chief were interviewed by a panel of four, including the police chiefs of Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Oakland, and a sergeant from San Mateo.

The best of the lot in each category will be scheduled for next week's interview sessions with members of the community, he said.

Once East Palo Altans have spoken with the remaining candidates, they will recommend their favorites to Howell.

Howell said he will hold final interviews during the last week of September and make offers by the first week in October.

The candidates were rounded up by advertising in all of the Bay Area's major newspapers and the Sacramento Bee, and Western Cities magazine, the periodical for the League of California Cities, a statewide publication.