

## Utility tax wins in East Palo Alto squeaker

Measure H, the East Palo Alto utility users tax, has won by a margin of 26 votes after all the final ballots were counted, San Mateo County election officials have reported.

The tax measure, which will generate almost \$1 million a year in taxes, was ahead by just eight votes on election night. That night, "provisional" ballots — absentee ballots which were turned in at polling places the day of the election — were yet to be counted.

The city, despite recent commercial development including the Ravenswood 101 Retail Center and the University Circle office towers, is still operating a tight budget. A recent 13 percent pay raise given to police officers was made contingent on the tax passing and was delayed until January.

The city's financial situation is expected to improve when a large Westin Hotel is built as part of University Circle and when IKEA builds its large retail store, which should open late next summer or early fall. ■

—Don Kazak

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