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Inland News

Wildomar to vote on cityhood

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By Rocky Salmon The Press-Enterprise

Video: Proposed boundaries of Wildomar

Residents in Wildomar, one of Southwest Riverside County's oldest unincorporated areas, will soon vote on whether they want to be a city.

On Thursday, a Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission unanimously agreed to let Wildomar residents vote on becoming a city and reported the financial stability of a new city is positive. If residents approve cityhood, it will be the first new city in Riverside County since Murrieta incorporated in 1992.

Incorporation proponents said they hope to get the issue on the February 2008 ballot and, if passed by a simple majority, cityhood would be possible by the following July.

LAFCO Commissioner Bob Buster, also a County Supervisor whose district includes Wildomar, said the incorporation vote was approved to put Wildomar's fate in the hands of its residents.

"The pros and cons that people brought before us today are for the long campaign ahead," said Bob Buster.

The more than 50 cityhood proponents that packed into a county boardroom stood and applauded the commission vote. The group said they realize they have a bigger battle ahead of them.

"It's sort of anti-climactic," said Bob Cashman, president of the proponent group Wildomar Incorporation Now. "We have been going at this for so long that when the vote happened I was ready for the next step. I'm really excited to put this out before the residents."

Three opponents spoke against the decision, including a Wildomar resident who already spent $25,000 to force the state to take a closer look at the financial document. Opponents expressed concern with the environmental documents, the role the county played and the timeliness of cityhood.

"I don't believe that enough consideration has been given to the real estate downturn and the widespread economic trouble that we are beginning to see the tip of the iceberg of," said opponent Martha Bridges.