

Almaden residents and visitors soon will be welcomed into valley

BY CAROL ROSEN

Sometime within the next six weeks, a new sign welcoming residents and visitors to Almaden Valley will go up where the median on Almaden Expressway widens just after the intersection at Coleman.

The new sign is a gift from local service clubs that's actually been in the works for more than 10 years. The idea began with former council members Pat Dando and Nancy Pyle, who set aside money for the sign. Current council member Johnny Khamis saved the money from Pyle to pay for a portion of the sign.

Pierce Signs has agreed to do the sign for \$18,000, less than other companies would have charged, according to Ken Tavernier, an Almaden Rotary past president and member of the endowment board, who has been heading the project. He called the sign a gift to the community that should be ready just in time for Christmas.

About 18 months ago, Almaden Rotary resurrected the sign idea and took it to Khamis who really liked it, says Tavernier. "It took a lot of research and back and forth to get the project going, but now it's been signed off by Santa Clara County and San Jose officials."

The sign as designed is

7.5 feet wide and 8 feet tall. It will have a stucco façade with metal lettering, backlit with LED lights fed from a solar pole. Those lights will go on at night.

in helping us get this job done," Tavernier says.

Almaden Kiwanis, which has painted murals before in the pediatric clinic rooms at Valley Medical Center,

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Knowing that Almaden has a number of service clubs, Tavernier went to the Kiwanis, Lions and the Assistance League of San Jose and asked them to help pay for the sign. Not only did they agree, they also will help participate in a project to beautify the soundwall at the intersection of Coleman and Almaden Expressway.

"Rotary isn't in it for glory. It's nice that other service clubs are helping participate," Tavernier says. Besides the funds from District 10, JSM Enterprises through vice president Colin Gray, is also helping financially. JSM recently won approval from the city to build 10 homes on the hill across from Almaden Lake Park.

"He's been instrumental

may help with the mural. That particular corner, across from La Mirador senior apartments, has been an eyesore for years, according to Tavernier.

"Our intention, once the sign is in place, is to work on the beautification of the corner," he says.

The initial plan was to put the sign up on that corner, Tavernier says, but the cost was prohibitive at \$50,000 to \$60,000.

His research suggested it would be better placed on the expressway median. A third project, to be completed after the soundwall mural with painted art boxes in front, will be tree plantings behind the sign. So far, there's no time line for the mural or the tree plantings.