



## Press Release

Release: Immediately  
Contact: Jason Hoppin  
Communications Manager  
454-3401

Joining communities across California, Santa Cruz County will be the site of a countywide summit on January 28 to help people take advantage of services and a new state law to help put them on the path to a brighter future.

The summit is organized around Proposition 47, the 2014 initiative overwhelmingly approved by California voters exactly one year ago today, including 77 percent of county residents. The free, public event will include legal, social services, health care, employment, housing and California Department of Motor Vehicles representatives helping people learn how to take advantage of these services as stepping stones to becoming more productive members of the community.

“This is an unprecedented opportunity for those who have already paid their debts to society,” Santa Cruz County Supervisor John Leopold said. “Past mistakes shouldn’t be a lifelong sentence for those trying to turn their lives around. We can lower recidivism if people have a chance to get a job and housing.”

The event is being organized by the Santa Cruz County Public Defender’s Office, the United Way of Santa Cruz County, the Watsonville Law Center, Communities Organizing for Relational Power in Action (COPA), the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County and the County of Santa Cruz.

In addition, the partners organizing the summit are debuting a new website, [www.prop47scc.org](http://www.prop47scc.org), to help individuals learn more about the process and direct them toward valuable resources.

As many as 11,000 Santa Cruz County residents could benefit from Prop 47, which allows those with records that include certain low-level felonies to have old charges reclassified as misdemeanors, opening up new opportunities for housing, education and employment. Under the law, people have until November 2017 to file for reclassification.

Record clearance pays off. A 2014 study by the San Jose State Record Clearance Project found that people who expunged old offenses saw an average salary increase of \$6,190 annually, along with increased productivity and a reduced reliance on government assistance.

Record reclassification is one part of Prop 47, which is estimated to save taxpayers from \$100 million to \$200 million beginning in 2016-17, according to the California Legislative Analyst’s Office. The savings

will support mental health and substance use treatment programs, as well as youth education, housing and employment services.

The Jan. 28 summit will be held at Temple Beth El, 3055 Porter Gulch Rd., Aptos. It will include a 2:30 p.m. press conference, with speakers to be announced at a later date. The public resource fair runs from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., with provider training and one-on-one consultations earlier in the day.

Light refreshments and free child care will be available.