

A Santa Cruz Smelter Would Ruin Our Air, Says Expert

An atmospheric physics expert today said building of a copper smelter in Santa Cruz County would be "an air pollution disaster" for Tucson.

A Santa Cruz supervisor, D. J. Baffert, yesterday invited the Anaconda Copper Company to build a smelter near its new mining property at Twin Buttes area, about 25 miles south of Tucson.

But J. B. Knaebel, Anaconda vice president in charge of the mine development there, said today, "We have no present plans for building a smelter."

Dr. James E. McDonald, senior physicist at the University of Arizona Institute of Atmospheric Physics, asked what the effect would be of a smelter located in the Santa Cruz Valley, south of the city said, "It would represent an air pollution disaster for Tucson.

"That is a strong statement, but such a thing calls for strong words," McDonald said.

He explained that under the weather conditions we have here early morning air circulation is downhill. Since the valley slants this way—in the same direction the Santa Cruz River runs — the morning winds "would bring smelter smoke and sulphur di-

oxide gases into the Tucson metropolitan area in completely intolerable concentrations virtually every day."

He explained that although higher winds are predominantly from the west here, the lower strata — up to about 3,000 feet, move from south to north in this valley in morning hours.

Knaebel did not rule out future smelter development, but said, "In any event, the company would never, in the future, do anything along lines that would create an air pollution problem for Tucson."

Baffert explained that he had called Knaebel with an offer of Santa Cruz County cooperation if Anaconda should want to build a smelter near its \$50 million open pit development at Twin Buttes.

Asked what response he had

received, Baffert said, "He didn't say yes and he didn't say no. He said he'd let us know if they became interested."

Baffert explained that he figures with all the mining now going on in this area it is logical to conclude that a smelter is needed and he would like to get it in his county to help ease the county property tax rate, the highest in the state.

On the question of air pollution he said, "I have heard they are building electrical smelters now that don't put out any smoke and maybe one of those could be built.

"I don't know much about smelter, but smoke wouldn't make any difference anyway because there aren't many people living in the Twin Buttes area," he added.

