

# Ortiz dedicated to serve

*Soledad's mayor has eyes on Monterey County supervisor post*

By **ZACHARY STAHL**  
The Salinas Californian

From rebuilding roofs for people in need to keeping sex offenders out of Soledad, Mayor Richard Ortiz said he's committed to serving his community.

Making a difference in the lives of Soledad residents inspires the fifth-term mayor.

"That's gratifying to me to see them happy when something is done and completed," Ortiz said.

After 24 years working at the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad, Ortiz retired in September as chief engineer of the steam plants in the prison.

But even at age 61, he said he's ready to take on the high-profile duties as Monterey County supervisor for District 3.

For the fifth and, he said, final time, Ortiz plans to run in 2006 to represent south Monterey County on the Board of Supervisors.

"I've always felt that the board needed someone that has an understanding of local government and understands the needs of the third district," he said. The seat is now held by Supervisor Butch Lindley.

In addition to preparing for his campaign, Ortiz said, he's been working with legislators to get the state to sell or lease to the city an unused wastewater-disposal plant at the Correctional Training Facility.

The City Council imposed an emergency moratorium on new buildings more than a year ago, when the city's wastewater treatment facilities threatened to overflow.

In October, the council extended the moratorium for another year after a failed effort to get state legislation allowing the city to buy the sewage plant.

Ortiz said the most challenging thing about being mayor is getting projects done on time.

"When you are dealing with



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Richard Ortiz, shown Nov. 22 at Soledad City Hall, is in his fifth term as the mayor of Soledad. Ortiz worked 24 years at Correctional Training Facility in Soledad.

## RICHARD ORTIZ

n **AGE:** 61

n **POSITION:** Fifth term as mayor of Soledad.

n **EXPERIENCE:** Has served on Soledad Hospital District board and as a volunteer fireman. Is serving on the Monterey County Water Resources board and Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority board.

n **EDUCATION:** Teaching credential from University of California, Berkeley. Has a structural engineer certificate.

n **PERSONAL:** Lives in Soledad with his wife, Virginia. The couple have two adult sons and one daughter.

local government, it's difficult to do so because there are always all kinds of obstacles out there," he said.

In his spare time, Ortiz said, he likes to hunt for deer, elk

and pheasant and enjoys fishing at San Antonio and Nacimiento lakes.

Ortiz's second cousin, Steve Longoria, said Ortiz has always been there for the community,

whether it's volunteering as a firefighter or driving an ambulance.

"Ever since I can remember he has been a volunteer and helping out the community," he said.

Longoria, a plumber in Soledad, said he has helped Ortiz put up a roof for a family who couldn't afford it.

"When we work together he just makes it funny," he said. "He'll just joke."

Longoria said Ortiz also is a talented cook, whether he's preparing tri-tip or fresh game from a hunting trip.

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