

Downtown JCPenney closing doors

WATSONVILLE — The city's JCPenney department store, in operation at its downtown location for more than 60 years, will close permanently later this year, the company announced today.

Twenty-two employees will be affected by the closing, which will be completed by July 31, the company said.

"We simply have no other option," Bill Risko, JCPenney's district manager, said in a prepared release. "Due to business declines in recent years and the store's performance not meeting company expectations, we have decided to close the store."

The store opened at its 501 Main St. location in 1923. Besides Gottschalks, JCPenney is currently the only department store in downtown Watsonville.

The company had considered relocating the store within the Watsonville community. However, it was unable to locate a suitable site that would meet requirements to justify a relocation, the company said.

In addition, JCPenney research indicated that many Watsonville residents are already shopping at larger JCPenney stores in other cities, the company said.