

# Deli returning to former site

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SANTA CRUZ — Zoccoli's Delicatessen is going home.

The Zoccoli family's struggle to keep their business alive in a tiny trailer after being put out on the street typified local determination following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.

"If everything goes all right, we'll be back May 1," Bob Zoccoli said Tuesday.

Zoccoli and other family members, including his wife, Ann, and son and daughter-in-law, Craig and Patty, were able to re-enter their old building on Pacific Avenue on Monday for the first time since the earthquake.

"It was a real warm feeling for

me," said Bob Zoccoli, whose parents and aunt opened the deli — known then as Plaza Market — in 1948.

"I thought as I walked in the door that so many years have passed and yet, here's the start of a new future," he said.

"The building could have gone down with the rest, but it didn't. It stood there and now it looks better than ever," Zoccoli said.

Even though the building, owned by Tom and Sharon Mills of Santa Cruz, survived, it required substantial upgrading, including the installation of a steel frame. That work has just been concluded.

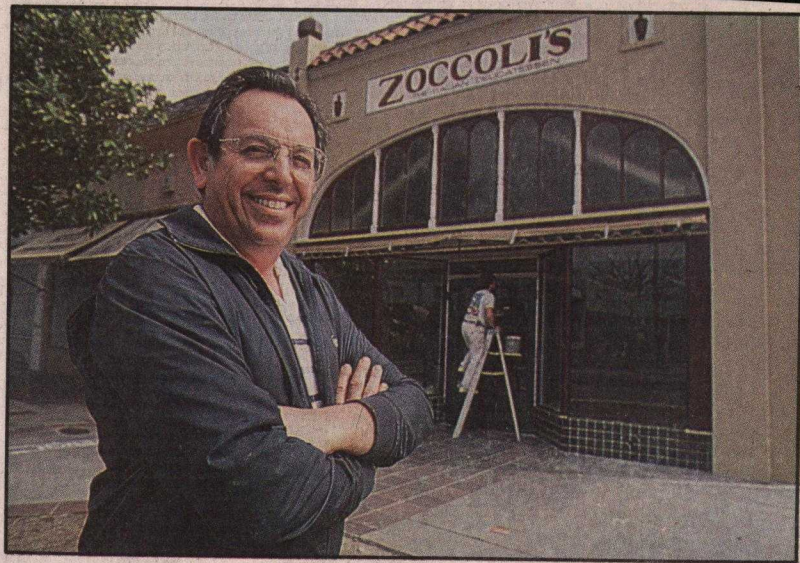
Zoccoli and his family have been operating out of a 10-by-30-foot trailer at the corner of Cedar and Center streets since the quake hit,

destroying many downtown buildings. Craig Zoccoli has described the experience as "working inside a pinball machine."

The family's plight after the earthquake became a public issue because of a community debate over the fate of the adjacent St. George Hotel, which was badly damaged in the quake.

A lengthy legal battle and subsequent appeal over demolition of the hotel held up repairs to the Zoccoli building, which shared a common wall. A Superior Court judge noted the family's plight when he originally ruled in favor of demolition.

Zoccoli's loyal lunch crowd stayed with the deli during the 18-month ordeal.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Bob Zoccoli hopes to reopen his popular delicatessen May 1.