



Mike McCollum

A forklift carries building materials to site of hangars under construction at Watsonville Airport.

## Construction under way on new airport hangars

By EMILIO ALVARADO  
STAFF WRITER

Construction of 47 new hangars is under way at the Watsonville Airport, but that will only put a dent in the waiting list for shelter for private aircraft.

Don French, airport manager, said there are 188 people waiting for a hangar.

"We could build a hundred more and it still wouldn't be enough," French said.

The new hangars will be completed early in January, French

said. They are designed for small aircraft and will rent for \$185 a month. Construction cost is estimated at \$847,000.

The airport now has 90 other hangars that rent for \$140 to \$160 a month. He said the average waiting period to get a hangar is about 12 years.

More hangars could be built in other areas of the airport, but that could mean building over areas where the Santa Cruz tarplant grows. The plant is considered an endangered species.

The city would have to initiate an extensive and expensive en-

vironment impact study to determine the feasibility of building hangars in the environmentally sensitive areas of the airport. The city has no immediate plans for the area.

At last night's City Council meeting, council members gave the nod to preliminary plans to build an animal shelter at the airport (see related story, this page). The site for the animal shelter is along Airport Boulevard near Hangar Way.

French said the animal shelter would "fit in well" at the

airport, because it is away from residential areas. City officials said the proposed site would also give residents better access to the animal shelter. The city's former animal shelter was closed down two years ago because it was deemed inadequate.

The future of the airport, French said, is "very positive." Commercial use of the airport helps stimulate the local economy, he said. This is particularly helpful during times of recession.