



Tarmo Hannula

Sean Kashino of Aptos walks past the old Valencia Hall on his way home from school Monday afternoon.

## Resuming the revitalization

Volunteers sought  
for restoration  
of Valencia Hall

### STAFF REPORT

APTOS — Santa Cruz County Parks representatives and members of the Valencia Hall and Post Office Restoration and Preservation Coalition are gearing up to resume renovation work on the buildings.

Officials will detail plans for this summer's restoration of the hall and post office and hold a volunteer sign-up day at the corner of Valencia and Bear Valley roads Saturday at 2 p.m.

The project is being completed in large part by community volunteers. Jeff Talmadge, a local building contractor, is the project manager. He is being assisted by Mark Young of Monterey Bay Design and Matt Johnson of Mediterranean Landscape and Concrete.

Work is planned for seven consecutive weekends beginning in early June. Volunteers began res-



Across the street from the hall, civil engineer Jeff Naess (left) and surveyor Dave Branum of Santa Cruz volunteer their expertise Monday in siting a new foundation for the hall and former post office (upper left).

toration work on Valencia Hall last fall.

According to local historians, Valencia Hall was built in 1882, as the centerpiece of a community en-

visioned by lumber baron Frederick A. Hihn. The hall, a nearby school and other buildings were constructed from the wood of

five redwood trees, whose stumps serve as the foundation for Valencia Hall.

Although the 30-by-40 foot hall was originally planned as a community center, local legend has it that dancing girls were brought in on weekends to entertain the mill workers and lumberjacks.

In 1902 the mill closed and the area became largely agricultural. A local farm bureau held ownership of the hall from 1932 until 1976, when the hall was deeded to the county.

Valencia Hall was named in the 1984 National Register of Historic Places, a year after the restoration coalition obtained a \$30,000 grant to replace the building's roof.

Plans are to relocate the hall

across Bear Valley Road, behind a building once used as a general store and post office and nearly as old as the hall, which will be used as a museum. The hall itself, after complete restoration, will once again be used as meeting place for the community of about 500 people.

The restoration of Valencia Hall and the post office will be presented to the Santa Cruz County Planning Commission on Wednesday for its approval. If the plans are approved by the commission, work is scheduled to begin June 7.

"We are completely optimistic the county will approve the plans. They have given us their expertise, and their blessing," said Carol Tengrove, founding member of the coalition.

For further information, volunteers are encouraged to call Pat Manning at 688-9177 or Tengrove at 688-3678.