

# At long last, Capitola Target opens doors

Watsonville officials predict little revenue loss

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OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

**CAPITOLA** — Hundreds of people congregated at the front door of the new Target store at the Capitola Mall Tuesday afternoon, waiting anxiously for the doors to open for the first time.

Before they did, Target managers and city officials whipped the crowd into a pre-shopping frenzy with a short rally that included several obligatory thank-yous and a handful of donations by Target to local charities.

Holding aloft pompons they found in their free Target tote bag, the enthusiastic shoppers were asked to shake them over their heads, creating a frenetic sea of red and white — the official colors of the ubiquitous Target logo.

William Herndon of Seaside said he came to show his sup-

port for a friend, who is one of several department managers who help manage the store's 300 employees.

But Herndon was an anomaly in the crowd, which consisted largely of locals who were excited about the store's mid-county location.

When the doors opened, the eager consumers flooded the 100,000 square-foot store, snapping up specials and snacking on free appetizers. A children's band played at the entrance for the steady stream of customers.

"I love Target," said Patricia Depalo of Santa Cruz. "You're looking at a Target die-hard."

Depalo said she appreciates the quality of the merchandise and the prices.

Target officials predicted that the store will generate at least \$5 million annually in



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**Kelsey Valenzuela takes part in the Target opening celebration on 41st Avenue Tuesday afternoon.**

sales tax revenue for the city of Capitola.

Assistant City Manager Marcela Tavantzis said she expects a slight reduction in sales tax revenue for Watsonville as county residents test out the

Capitola store, but predicted that some business will return as the novelty wears off.

"I am not going to say I don't think it will impact our sales

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tax, but I don't think it will be a long-term, deep impact," she said.

Tavantzis pointed to the Home Depot store in Capitola, which skeptics predicted would take business away from its predecessor on Green Valley Road.

"But that wasn't the case," she said. "It leveled off."

Tavantzis also said she expects that residents from Aptos north will continue to patronize the Watsonville store.

Cindy Valenzuela was unaware Target was opening when she brought her daughter to the Dairy Queen for ice cream on Tuesday, but the two came to be a part of the excitement.

"It's about time we have a Target here," she said.

Capitola resident Jeri Parish agreed.

"We've been waiting for something like this for our area," she said. "There aren't any other stores like this here."

Brooke Naegle, 14, said she already hangs out with friends at the mall, so the new store likely won't be as much of a draw for young people that the Watsonville Target store is.

Still, Naegle said she was excited about the new retail prospects.

"I really like shopping here for new school stuff," she said.

Alyssa Martin, 10, who came



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**The new Target store in Capitola is in the former Gottschalks department store building.**

with her sister Alexa, 9, said the store is "awesome for sure."

Emily Yeo, who works at the Takara Japanese restaurant next door, said she was relieved that the former Gottschalk's building, which has been vacant for approximately three years, finally has a tenant.

"We've been waiting for a long time," she said. "We need the business."

Capitola Mall spokesperson Bryce Root called the store a "fantastic addition" to the mall.

"Now we're a one-stop shop," he said.

Capitola Mayor Mike Termini praised Target for the smooth transition into the mall, and said that Target donated \$2,000 to Soquel Unified School District, \$2,000 to the Tannery Arts Center and \$1,000 to the City of Capitola, which police chief Rudy Escalante said would be used for activities during National Night Out on Aug. 7.

"From the time they walked into the City Council meeting they have been a constant example of a conscientious retailer," Termini said.



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**Hundreds of people showed up for the grand opening of the new Target store in the Capitola Mall Tuesday afternoon.**