



New, improved Watsonville Flea Market opens

Mariachi Vallarta, above, strolled among shoppers yesterday at the new Watsonville Flea Market at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds. At left, Gustavo Calderon, left, and Arturo Juarez waited for business at their tire booth at the flea market.

Story and photos by Kurt Ellison

SPORTING many improvements, the new Watsonville Flea Market opened at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds over the weekend with 140 vendors selling goods to a light turnout.

Two new owners have made many changes to the dirt field that was used last year for the fair's first flea market. Much of the field has been paved and resurfaced with enough spaces for an expansion to 480 vendors. Six new snack shacks were built, along with three new restrooms and flea market offices.

Owners Mario Trujillo and Dan Carlino hope the new market will pull shoppers from both the Santa Cruz and Monterey areas. Both

owners have extensive experience in managing the Berryessa Flea Market in San Jose and plan to duplicate its reputation for family fun and value in Watsonville.

While flea market faithfuls strolled through the grounds yesterday, a mariachi band played traditional Mexican folk songs. The produce row featured vendors selling fruits and vegetables with selections that could interest any gourmet. Clothing, antiques, tapes and CDs, toys and auto tires were also in plentiful supply.

Except for the weekend of the county fair in September, the new Watsonville Flea Market will continue rain or shine on Saturdays and Sundays year-round.