

Tax-funded Highway 1 repair to take months

EARTHQUAKE '89 - Watsonville

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WATSONVILLE — Work began Wednesday on the \$4.8 million repair of Highway 1 here, which is expected to be closed at least until mid-March.

Money for the project will come from a quarter-cent per-dollar sales tax increase takes effect Friday and lasts until Dec. 31, 1990.

For most of the counties in the state, the new sales and use tax rate will be 6½ percent, but in Santa Cruz, as well as several others, the

rate will be 6.75 percent.

The tax was approved in the Legislature's special session this month.

Those extra one-fourths of pennies are expected to raise \$800 million over the next 13 months. Most of that money will, along with federal funds, pay for rebuilding roads, bridges and public buildings damaged in the Oct. 17 earthquake that struck the Santa Cruz area.

The 800-foot section of Highway 1 that crosses Struve Slough has

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been closed since the earthquake, which shook the bridges over the slough off their pilings.

The cement columns pierced the roadway on the southbound bridge, and it collapsed around them into the slough. The northbound bridge is barely standing, a Caltrans engineer said.

A new bridge must be built, said engineer Ramin Abidi. He said completion is "hoped for" by mid-

March, depending on the weather.

Caltrans has taken some flak for not starting the repair sooner, but Abidi said, "We've moved as fast as we could. This is more than moving dirt and replacing asphalt. This is a total bridge replacement."

Motorists have been detouring around the damaged bridge, with southbound motorists having the option of taking the Larkin Valley Road exit to San Andreas Road, or continuing down Highway 1 to the Green Valley Road exit and using city streets.