

Earthquake - 1989
Long road back

8 10-17-93

Financial shock still felt in SC

By **MARTHA MENDOZA**
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — "It's the same old song," said Santa Cruz City Manager Richard Wilson. "... four years later," adds Assistant Director of Finance Steve Ando.

They soberly shake their heads. Although a vast amount of earthquake recovery has been completed in Santa Cruz since Oct. 17, 1989, city officials are still trying to get the Federal Emergency Management Agency to pay millions of dollars for public damage.

The city has received about \$10 million from FEMA and the state Office of Emergency Services, to cover some rebuilding costs and to pay for the emergency services immediately following the earthquake.

The remaining unpaid bills in Santa Cruz are:

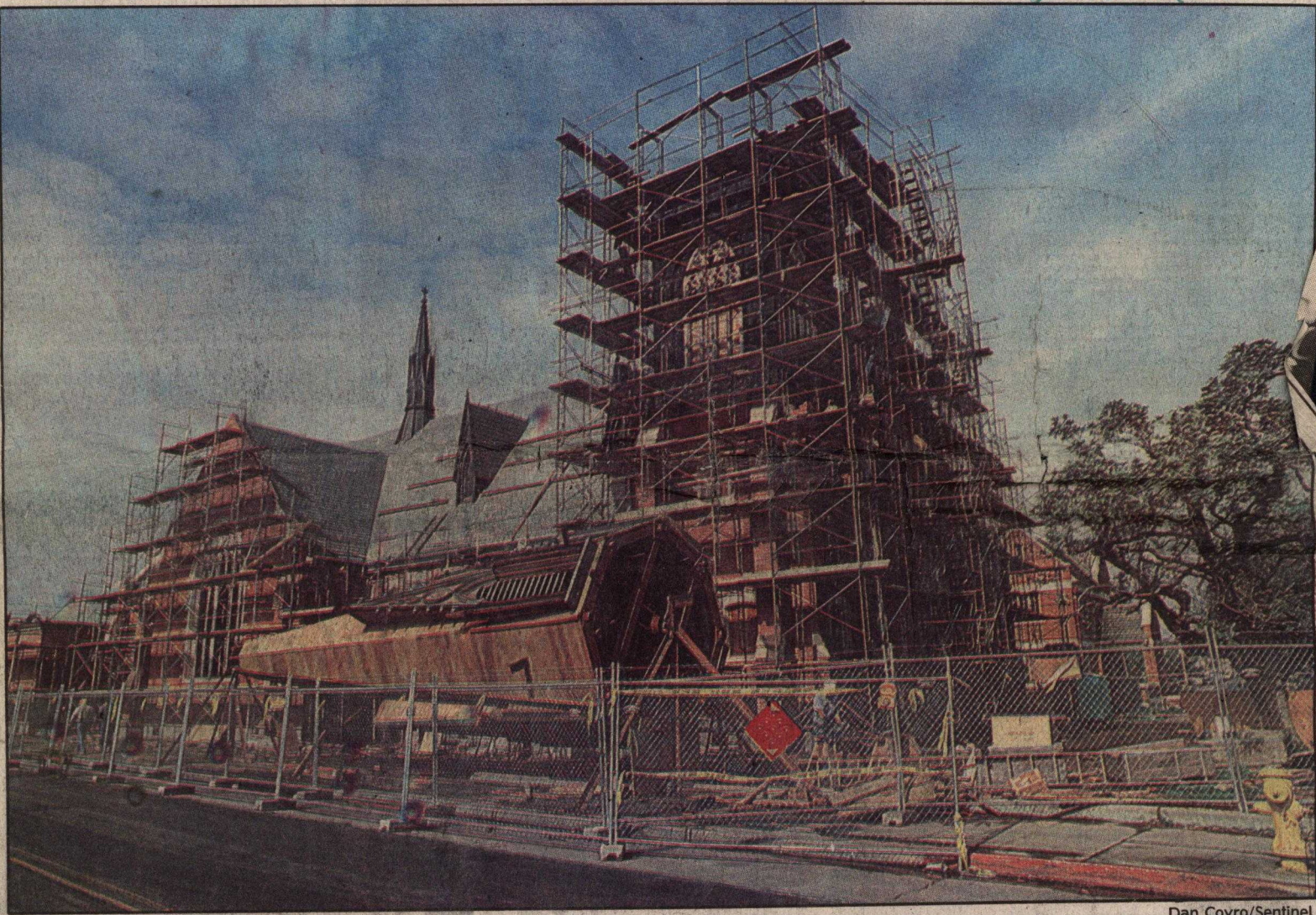
- Undetermined portions of the \$10 million downtown renovation completed this spring.
- \$100,000 to replace Fire Department administration offices.
- \$300,000 to replace Parks and Recreation Department administrative offices.
- Almost \$500,000 to rebuild the Police Department's wing of City Hall.
- \$150,000 to reimburse the costs of demolishing the Elks Building on Pacific Avenue.

Construction has not yet started on the police, fire and parks and recreation projects. The damaged buildings are blocked off and staff work in temporary offices in rented quarters near City Hall.

Mayor Neal Coonerty says reimbursement is a "slow and deliberate process."

"I'm confident we'll eventually

Please see **SANTA CRUZ** — A10



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Rebuilding quake-damaged St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Watsonville is scheduled to be completed by March.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Bettie Wilson's house in Boulder Creek remains unfinished.

Watsonville looking ahead — not behind

By **MARIANNE BIASOTTI**
Sentinel staff writer

WATSONVILLE — Unlike past years, no public ceremonies here will recall the fourth anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake, but scaffolding and empty lots that dot the city's downtown serve as silent reminders.

"Most people are looking forward now — we've stopped measuring our time in terms of how many years we've moved forward from the earthquake," said Rev. Mike Miller of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Watsonville,

which was demolished after the earthquake and is scheduled to be rebuilt by March.

While rebuilding efforts have been successful — nearly 80 percent of the buildings downtown have been repaired or rebuilt — it still looks like a smile after a fight, with a few teeth missing.

"I know some people are gritting their teeth and holding their breath and wondering, 'Are we going to make it?'" said Pam Salcedo, director of the non-profit El Pajaro Community Development

Please see **WATSONVILLE** — A10

More inside

- Relief checks are not in the mail yet — Page A8
- Dog plagued by quake nightmares — Page A8
- Programs help pay retrofitting costs — Page A8
- State improves lines of communication — Page A8
- Historic Cabrillo building still closed — Page A8
- Church is poised for resurrection — Page A10

One family's story of hardship and triumph

By **DONNA KIMURA**
Sentinel staff writer

BOULDER CREEK — Today, on the fourth anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake, Bettie Wilson will say to herself, "It's not over."

For her, there have been two disasters — the 15 seconds the earth shook and every day after she has spent attempting to rebuild her home.

"The story is a mile long," she says as she begins to recount the undeserved hardships she has faced and the minor triumphs

she has fought for.

Wilson, a 41-year-old mother and member of the San Lorenzo Valley Unified School Board, sits in her Boulder Creek home a few days before the annual observance of the big one.

This new house was supposed to replace the one she lost in the Oct. 17, 1989, earthquake, but it remains unfinished.

The incomplete rooms cry for more work to be done. Like a scar, they serve as a daily reminder of an old wound.

Wilson should have known the

road to recovery wouldn't be a smooth one when, at the first step, the Federal Emergency Management Agency lost her application for aid.

"We did what we were told, and they lost it," she says.

The Wilsons then applied for a state loan, but were denied because their income wasn't high enough, she says.

Dale Wilson works at Salz Tannery and Bettie Wilson works as an office manager at H & R Block during the tax season. Their 11-year-old son, Eric, is in the sixth

grade.

They eventually received a \$20,400 state grant.

Their home of 15 years, however, had to be demolished and was knocked down three months after the quake.

The Wilsons then moved into an old pink trailer that FEMA and Valley Churches United in Ben Lomond bought for \$3,500.

Almost a year after the earthquake, the American Red Cross agreed to pay roughly \$85,000 for a new home, Wilson says.

Please see **ONE FAMILY** — A8