

## VETERANS MEMORIAL BUILDING

# Judge denies petition to reopen Vets Hall

Veterans

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SANTA CRUZ — A Superior Court judge Thursday denied a bid by a local veterans group to reopen the shuttered Veterans Memorial Building downtown.

The attorney for the United Veterans Council of Santa Cruz County argued the January closure of the building by county officials was unwarranted and veterans

should be allowed to return.

Judge Timothy Volkmann, however, sided with the county, which shut the building on the advice of local engineers who suggested it might topple in an earthquake.

"The outcome is disappointing," said Tim McCormick, vice president of the United Veterans Council and a member of the Bill Motto Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5888. "But I think

we've made our case that the county has overstated the cost of repairs as well as the need for repair."

Although the veterans' request to immediately open the building was denied, the United Veterans Council is proceeding with its suit to get back in.

Volkmann set a trial date for the case in September.

The Vets Hall has been a popular meeting place for vets as well as other com-

munity groups and, until its closure, housed the Veterans Service Office, which has since moved to the county government campus on Emeline Avenue.

County officials have estimated the Vets Hall will cost \$1.4 million to repair, but have not said how they will get the money nor when the fixes will be made. The hall is expected to be closed through much of this year, at least.

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