

Art and history center on target for spring finish

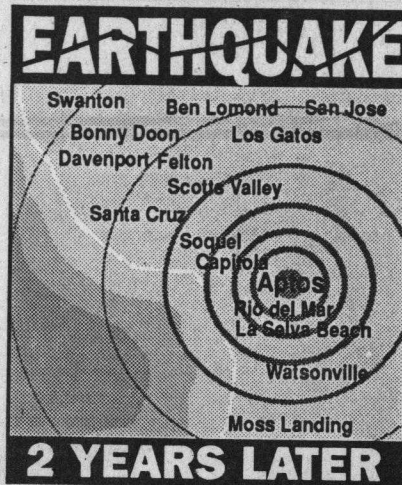
By KAREN CLARK
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Donations have slowed, but construction of the McPherson Center for Art and History on Front Street has remained on target.

The renovation of the old county jail into a retail/restaurant complex with offices on two floors above is expected to be finished late next spring.

Just to the south, the museum that will be built on the existing parking lot should be up by the end of the summer, said project manager Jim Staniec.

Construction on the three-story museum is scheduled to start in early December, he said. Reconstruction on the now-gutted old jail



building also should begin in December.

Demolition work inside the old

jail took longer than expected, said Staniec, because of a larger asbestos-removal job than had been projected.

"But it all went real smooth," said Staniec. "We hope the rest goes as smoothly."

This commercial portion of the project is being funded by \$2.5 million in grants from the federal Economic Development Administration and the state, said Earleen Overend, director of the center's fund-raising campaign.

Money for the \$3.9 million museum next door, however, still is about \$1 million short. Work will continue, however, because of a loan approved by the county.

Overend said the campaign will kick into a higher gear through the end of the year as center officials

work to raise the \$1 million.

There still are rooms that haven't been named, said Overend, and donations of \$25,000 and up would honor the contributors' names on these areas.

Smaller donations of \$1,000 and up would put the contributors' names on a commemorative wall in the museum.

The Octagon building on the corner of Cooper and Front streets also will be renovated, and will be used for small art shows, lectures,

programs and children's classes.

The space would be shared with the Historical Trust and the art museum.

Plans also call for renovation of Abbott Square between the Octagon and the new Cooper House. There will be a plaza between the buildings for people to eat outdoors.

Cooper House rebuilding plans will go to the Zoning Board on Oct. 24, and Overend said getting a building up there will benefit the

center, as well as the rest of downtown.

"That's the frustration. It's not just one project, or two projects; the whole downtown has to work to make it successful," said Overend. "I think downtown people are still looking at what's going to happen. I think it's that kind of climate."

There are no commitments from retail clients for the renovated jail yet, said Overend, but "we have some pretty good possibilities."

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
ARTISTS
90-1499