

Pre-quake retail sales were on upward path

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Taxable sales for the city of Watsonville increased 4 percent between the first quarter of 1988 and the first quarter of 1989.

That growth, while small, is better than Santa Cruz County as a whole managed between the two quarters — a slim rise of 0.3 percent. The county's rate of growth in sales is down quite a bit from the 16.8 percent growth it saw in first-quarter sales between 1987 and 1988.

And Watsonville did far better than Santa Cruz and Scotts Valley, where taxable sales dropped by 5.9 percent and 3 percent respectively.

Capitola, on the other hand, did

quite well, growing by 12 percent between the two quarters.

Taxable sales in the state grew by 6.4 percent between the two quarters. That increase, according to the State Board of Equalization, is the slowest growth rate in the state since the fourth quarter of 1987, when an identical rate was posted. The stock market crash in October of that year was considered a contributing factor then.

Sales took large increases in several different categories for Watsonville.

Building materials and farm implements posted the highest increase: 32.7 percent. In the first quarter of 1988, sales were \$6,015,000; in the same quarter in 1989, they were \$7,984,000.

Watsonville did far better than Santa Cruz and Scotts Valley, where taxable sales dropped by 5.9 percent and 3 percent respectively.

Home furnishings and appliance sales were the second highest, with a 26.6 percent increase. In the first quarter of 1988, taxable sales of home furnishings were \$898,000; in the first quarter of 1989, sales were \$1,137,000.

Food stores sales went up 22.5 percent, from \$3,947,000 to \$4,835,000. Drug store sales went

up 15.9 percent, to \$2,757,000 from \$2,379,000.

Taxable sales rose 14.2 percent in the auto dealers and auto supplies category, from \$10,408,000 to \$11,885,000.

There were also some significant decreases. "Other retail" dropped by 13.8 percent from \$6,715,000 to \$5,788,000; general

merchandise fell by 9.1 percent, from \$3,254,000 to \$2,957,000; packaged liquor store sales dropped 6.6 percent from \$610,000 to \$570,000; and eating and drinking places sales were down 4.8 percent, from \$5,197,000 to \$4,945,000.

Total taxable sales for Watsonville were \$61,119,000 in the first quarter of 1989, and \$58,540,000 for the same quarter in 1988.

Santa Cruz took drops in sales in eating and drinking places and auto dealers and auto supplies. Sales in that city rose in food stores, building materials and "other retail stores."

Total sales for the first quarter in 1989 for Santa Cruz were \$109,622,000; for the same quarter

in 1988, they were \$116,539,000.

Capitola posted significant increases in apparel and general merchandise stores and "other retail" stores. But sales dropped significantly in the auto dealers and auto supplies category.

Capitola's total was \$45,956,000 in the first of quarter 1988, \$51,515,000 in the first quarter of 1989.

The county posted small increases in all categories, moving from first-quarter totals of \$365,661 in 1988 to \$366,768,700 in 1989.

Whatever trends these figures might have otherwise indicated have no doubt been thrown out of kilter by the disastrous earthquake that hit on Oct. 17.