



Kurt Ellison

Bud Eaton says the days of the mom-and-pop stores are at an end.

## Jennings Electronics closing

Citing rising costs and a trend toward "throw-away" appliances, the owner of Jennings Electronics in Watsonville has decided to close after 17 years.

"The days of the mom and pop stores are over," said owner Bud Eaton, who will close the store at 1046 Freedom Blvd. in about two weeks when all his inventory is sold.

The store, which sells and repairs electronic equipment, did well for 10 years, Eaton said, but things haven't been so good in the last few years.

"We did quite a bit of stereo

repair" in the first 10 years, Eaton said, but the trend today is toward what he calls "throw-away stereos."

When something goes wrong with an inexpensive stereo, people will simply buy another one, Eaton said. And the expensive stereos, he said, don't require much repair.

The trend has not only hurt the repair business, but the sales of parts for people who would do their own repair.

Eaton said he's unable to compete with the larger stores in town, which can buy in bulk and offer substantially lower

prices. "I can't blame the people" for buying appliances elsewhere, he said.

Another factor in the closing, Eaton said, is the cost of labor. "Insurance has gone up. I can't afford employees."

Eaton's staff dwindled from eight in the early years to four early this year. Those four positions have been eliminated as Eaton prepares for closure.

Eaton opened the retail store after buying the business from Joe Jennings, who had run it primarily as a wholesale outlet. It had been in several locations in Santa Cruz and Watsonville.