

# \$1 million grant will help laid-off workers in county



BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL FILE

Workers in the cut flower industry have been hit by layoffs in the county.

More than 500 have lost jobs in past year

By JONDI GUMZ

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SANTA CRUZ — A nearly \$1 million grant from the state Employment Development Department will provide training and job search services for people laid off during the past year in the county.

The grant, from federal stimulus funds, is going to the county Workforce Investment Board.

"We're glad we got this money," said Director David Lundberg, who applied in April, citing an "emergency need."

At the time, 220 people had been laid off compared to 167 the previous year, up 30 percent.

"That's a very big increase I did not expect," said Lundberg, who had no uncommitted funds available.

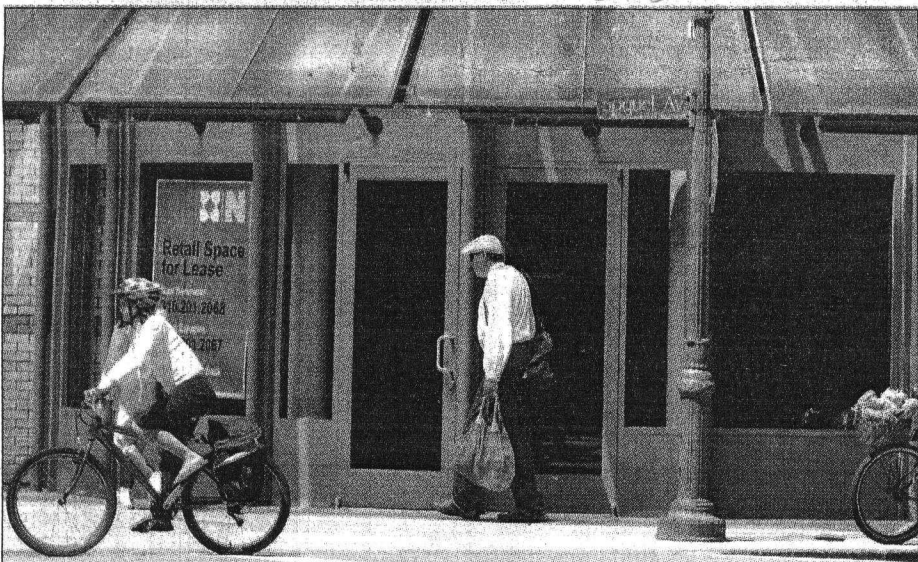
Although the local unemployment rate dropped to 11.4 percent in May, the number of layoffs in the past year has grown to more than 500.

Among the largest:

■ UC Santa Cruz is laying off 50 staff employees in the wake of another round of state funding cutbacks.

■ The Pajaro Valley school district issued 101 pink slips to certificated staff and anticipated 50 layoffs of classified employees. All of the classified layoffs and 60 of the certificated layoffs were due to budget cutbacks.

■ Bethany University, a private Christian school facing financial difficulties, plans to close, which affects 22 full-time faculty, up to 50 part-time faculty, and an unknown number of staff.



BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL

The vacant former location of Borders downtown is a reminder of retail jobs lost.

## SANTA CRUZ COUNTY LAYOFFS

More than 500 workers in Santa Cruz County have been laid off in the past year.

### JULY TO DECEMBER 2010

Good Earth Tea .....	50
Cabrillo Lanes .....	11
Zip Realty .....	5
Earthbound Farms.....	100
Homeless Services Center.....	17

### JANUARY TO JUNE 2011

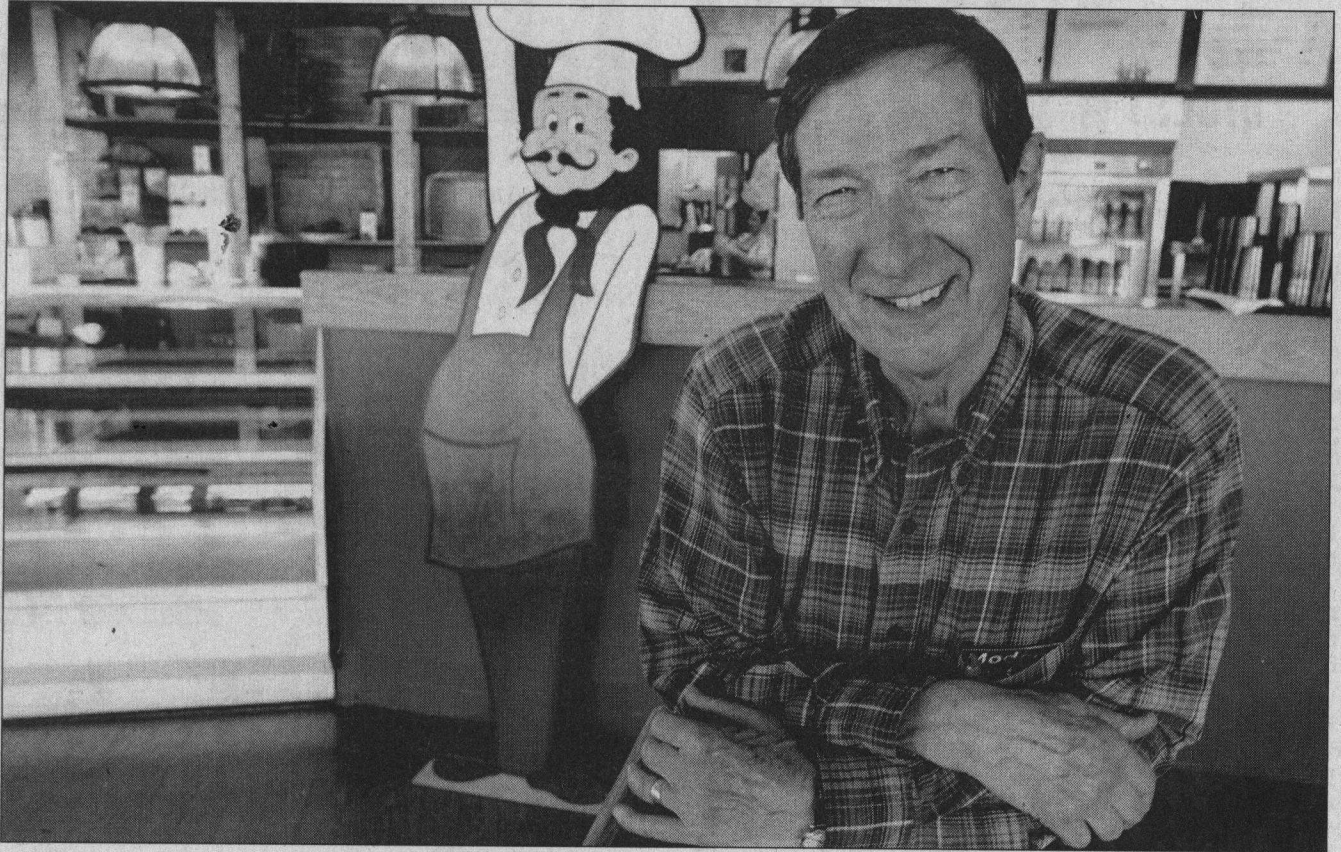
Home Consignment Showcase.....	NA
Red Poppy.....	NA
Bookworks.....	NA
Cali Zen .....	NA
Yogurt Delite .....	NA
Borders.....	30
Velvet Underground .....	7

Blockbuster.....	NA
Gigi's Bakery & Cafe* .....	7
Gateways Books* .....	NA
Pajaro Valley school district, classified* .....	50
Pajaro Valley school district, certificated* .....	101
Baker Brothers* .....	15
Marie Callender's restaurant* .....	NA
State Farm* .....	4
B & H Flowers Inc.* .....	40
Bethany University* .....	72
UC Santa Cruz* .....	50

\*Since March 31

SOURCE: Santa Cruz County Workforce Investment Board, Sentinel research

SEE JOBS ON A2



Len Hancock closed his Gigi's restaurant in April.

BILL LOVEJOY/SENTINEL FILE

## JOBS

Continued from A1

■ B & H Flowers Inc., flower growers in Watsonville for 11 years, is closing in July and consolidating at its headquarters in Carpinteria, resulting in 40 layoffs.

■ Marie Callender's parent company, burdened by debt, closed the restaurant in Capitola this month, putting a couple of dozen people out of work.

The funding came from the 25 percent of dislocated worker funds reserved to the governor for "rapid response activities."

"We are committed to bringing the local economy back from the slump by assisting workers who have lost their jobs due to layoffs and business closures," said Pam Harris, chief deputy director of the Employment Development Department.

Locally, job training and a tailored mix of college classes will be offered to help people find work.

The action plan calls for 90 training slots, skills assessments and upgrades, re-skill assessment workshops, and job fairs.

Participants will receive assistance through local partnerships from Cabrillo College, Shoreline Workforce

Development Services and the Small Business Development Center.

Lundberg said information already has been provided to workers at Gigi's Bakery and Cafe, Pajaro Valley schools and Baker Brothers Furniture.

A "rapid response event" is planned next week at UC Santa Cruz, Lundberg said.

He's also reaching out to Bethany University.

"We contact a business that's laying off and meet with employees," he said. "We inform them of what services are available at career centers, training, job search and labor market information."

In addition, Employment Development Department

staff present information on how to apply for unemployment benefits.

What the Workforce board really wants to do is avert layoffs in the first place.

In January 2010, the agency invested \$50,000 with the Small Business Development Center to provide counseling and other services to employers in financial difficulty. According to the board, the investment saved 87 jobs, averting layoffs that could have cost the state \$309 in weekly benefits for 87 people, saving \$500,000.

For information, call the Workforce Investment Board at 454-4873. To reach the Small Business Development Center, call 479-6136.