

Quake hazard

Louden Nelson Center declared unsafe, closed by city

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In an emergency action, the Loudon Nelson Community Center was closed last night because a group of structural engineers say the building fails to comply with earthquake standards.

The heavily used Community Center is owned and run by the City of Santa Cruz.

City officials say it will take at least 10 months to complete the major repair work needed to bring the structure up to building code.

Meanwhile, some of the groups using the center have already been rerouted. The senior group that has meals there will now be served in the Civic Auditorium.

Child-care facilities will be moved to Harvey West Park

and other sites around the city. At last night's city council meeting City Parks and Recreation Director Jim Lang said parents and staff will meet in the next few days to find child-care sites.

Lang said temporary facilities also will be sought for other groups using the Loudon Nelson Center.

The structural engineers,

Peter Boyce Associates, found several problems with the building.

The engineers said interior walls, which could act to brace the building during an earthquake, are not connected to the roof or foundation.

The connection of the roof to the top of the walls was found to be inadequate. The engineering report stated, "In buildings of this type, these connections

have typically been the point of failure under severe seismic loads."

Also the stress on the roof framing was found to be 1½ times the working stress allowed by the Uniform Building Code. The roof framing was deemed "generally inadequate."

Based on this report, the city's chief building official

issued an abatement notice to vacate the building. At 10 p.m., the Loudon Nelson Center was closed.

Ironically, the structural engineer's study was done prior to a planned renovation of the auditorium and dining room.

The cost of the repair work will be about \$250,000. Officials are not sure yet where the money will come from.

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