

# Ceremonies signal start of Deer Park construction

By BOB SMITH

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held Wednesday noon for the 80,000-square-foot, \$4 million Deer Park shopping center in Rio del Mar.

County officials and Aptos civic leaders assisted Cliff Swenson, president of the Carl H. Swenson Co. of San Jose, and Jim Ellmore of the Santa Cruz architectural firm Ellmore and Titus in turning over a symbolic first shovel of earth.

Swenson said it will take about eight months to complete the project, with opening day scheduled for early next year.

The San Jose company is following through with a concept originally developed by Bob Marani — construct a shopping center in the Rio del Mar area that reflects the wishes and concerns of the local residents.

Another company, gave up its plans to build on the site several years ago in the face of massive public opposition.

But Marani turned that opposition around and gained community support for a medium-sized shopping center that reflected the community's concerns about size and function.

About 60 per cent of the available space is now committed, leasing agent Dick Little said at the ceremonies.

Tenants now include the Bank of America, Eureka Federal Savings and Loan, Lou Alongi Deluxe Food Market, a pharmacy, to be owned by Frank Karnian, the Deer Park Bottle Shop liquor store owned by Rick Alward, a second Waitzman jewelry store, a travel agency, tobacco shop, boutique and a photo shop.

The center contains 72,000 square feet of leasable space, Little said, and 45,000 square feet has been committed.

The remaining 8,000 square feet, he said, is occupied by the tavern and the old barn.

Swenson said his company still does not have a tenant for the famous Deer Park tavern, closed since the first of the year. Until recently, Santa Cruz restaurant owner Al Castagnola planned to open a restaurant there, but Swenson said Castagnola has now backed out because of his brother's serious illness.

Plans now for the tavern building, with the outbuildings already demolished, include cleanup, painting the inside and outside and possibly a new roof. And although it will depend on the tenant's wishes, Swenson would like to see an outdoor patio and the penthouse apartment opened up for public use.

The old Deer Park barn will be preserved, Ellmore told the crowd. Earlier, it was feared deterioration was too far along to save it.

"The county planning department says we will save the barn," he added, "so it will be preserved as a barn. There is a definite nostalgic value in having it there."

There will be a concrete floor in the barn, the structure will be stabilized, with some of the lumber from an old stable being used in restoring a badly-vandalized barn, the architect added. "It will be used for community functions and as an adjunct to an amphitheater and possibly the outdoor cafe."