

# Farmers market chief resigns

By **STETT HOLBROOK**

SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

The manager of Watsonville's struggling farmers market has resigned.

Lea Goodman, who has managed the market for three years, tendered her resignation last week, effective Sept. 1. She said she had planned to resign at the end of the season but decided to quit now because a more lucrative and less time-demanding job became available.

"More money for less time is a pretty good deal," she said.

Goodman will work part time as a trade-show coordinator for a Silicon Valley firm. While she will no longer work at the Watsonville market, she will continue to manage farmers markets in Santa Cruz, Felton and Live Oak. She said she decided to quit the Watsonville market because it was the most time consuming and farthest from her home.

Goodman's resignation comes at a pivotal time for the Peck Street market. The number of customers and vendors has been low since the market began three years ago. But aided by a \$12,000 grant from the city, market organizers launched a publicity campaign last month to promote new hours and vendors in hopes of boosting local interest.

The market does not keep sales figures but crowds appear to have increased since the changes were made.

"Lea has done a good job of taking us from here to there,"

said Bill Callahan of the market's board of directors.

But with her work at other Santa Cruz County markets, he said Goodman was stretched too thin. "I think her plate got a little full," he said.

Privately, some people familiar with the market said they felt Goodman was not spending the time needed to help generate new business and reinvigorate the market.

Sam Earnshaw, a member of the market's board of directors who has shouldered much of the work to revamp it, praised Goodman's contributions but said he welcomed the opportunity to bring in someone new.

"The opportunities are that we can continue this new boost of energy," he said. "What that next person needs to do is spend a lot of time connecting the market with the city of Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley."

The board of directors named Aromas grower Nancy Gammons as the market's interim manager. Gammons, who has been a vendor at the market, speaks Spanish and knows the community, Earnshaw said.

Gammons has been selling at Bay Area markets for 15 years and said she wants to see Watsonville's market reflect the ethnic diversity of the Pajaro Valley. That means bringing more vendors and different types of food to appeal to the area's diverse cultures, she said.

"If we try to style it after a Santa Cruz market, it won't work," she said.

She said she wants to see a mix of organic and nonorganic produce as well as music.