

Sales down in first half of '91

State figures for the first six months of 1991 show that sales were down from 1990 in Santa Cruz County, as they were across the state.

The State Board of Equalization report on statewide sales for the first three months reveals what the board calls "the most severe decline in taxable sales in the last three decades, and the first drop since the 1982 recession."

Sales statewide dropped by 5.2 percent, or more than \$3 billion, from the first quarter of 1990. In Santa Cruz County, sales dropped 6.3 percent.

The second quarter, which has not yet been broken down by city, had a smaller decline in sales. The statewide decline was 4.6 percent in the second quarter; Santa Cruz County's was 2.6 percent.

Analysts said that while the first three months were dire, they weren't as bad as the worst of the 1982 recession when compared in "real" dollars — that is, when adjusted for inflation. Actual volume of sales decreased 8.6 percent in first quarter 1991, compared with 9.9 percent in the worst quarter of 1982.

Watsonville fared the worst in Santa Cruz County, with a 13 percent overall decline. Santa Cruz had a 7 percent decline, and Capitola a 0.5 percent decline.

Watsonville and Santa Cruz were both hurt by a decrease in auto sales of about 29 percent. Auto sales in Capitola, with its growing auto plaza, increased by close to 0.2 percent.

Service stations statewide showed an increase in sales, due in part, analysts said, to the Persian Gulf war that helped drive up gasoline and oil prices an average of 15 percent. Gasoline consumption decreased, however, by 3.2 percent, to 3.2 billion gallons over the three-month period.

Watsonville

Figures in thousands of dollars

TYPE OF BUSINESS	1st Qtr. 91	1st Qtr. 90
Clothing stores	1,788	1,789
Gen. merchandise store	1,328	1,410
Packaged liquor store	752	544
Food stores	4,734	4,116
Restaurants/bars	6,541	5,959
Furniture/appliance	1,635	1,323
Bldg. materials/farm	6,761	8,135
Auto dealers/supplies	9,078	12,845
Service stations	3,165	3,083
Other retail	7,952	10,142
RETAIL TOTAL	43,734	49,346
All other outlets	13,244	16,375
TOTAL ALL OUTLETS	56,978	65,721

Santa Cruz

Figures in thousands of dollars

TYPE OF BUSINESS	1st Qtr. 91	1st Qtr. 90
Clothing stores	1,789	2,495
Gen. merchandise store	1,132	1,243
Packaged liquor store	2,308	2,168
Food stores	6,852	5,992
Restaurants/bars	16,021	15,862
Furniture/appliance	4,351	4,256
Bldg. materials/farm	7,871	7,852
Auto dealers/supplies	18,385	25,973
Service stations	8,730	6,920
Other retail	14,899	16,606
RETAIL TOTAL	82,338	89,367
All other outlets	22,045	22,680
TOTAL ALL OUTLETS	104,383	112,047

Capitola

Figures in thousands of dollars

TYPE OF BUSINESS	1st Qtr. 91	1st Qtr. 90
Clothing stores	6,349	6,435
Gen. merchandise store	15,945	14,531
Packaged liquor store	N/A	N/A
Food stores	4,073	4,462
Restaurants/bars	7,737	7,595
Furniture/appliance	2,327	2,927
Bldg. materials/farm	3,668	3,687
Auto dealers/supplies	9,332	9,195
Service stations	2,248	1,864
Other retail	10,747	12,229
RETAIL TOTAL	62,426	62,925
All other outlets	3,060	2,916
TOTAL ALL OUTLETS	65,486	65,841