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VCF Earthquakes R.P.  
**Aptos still  
suffering  
economically** 10/16/91 p.1

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Two years after the October 1989 earthquake, many of the physical wounds suffered by Aptos residents and businesses have healed, but there's a hidden side of the picture.

With the epicenter just 2 miles away in the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, Aptos Village was the closest population center. But largely because its buildings were constructed of wood — not brick as in Watsonville and Santa Cruz — the damage was not as pictorially spectacular.

"The physical look of Aptos doesn't begin to compare with Santa Cruz or Watsonville," she said.

But the damage to Aptos's business community goes far beyond the physical condition of the buildings they occupy, said Karen Hibble, executive director of the Aptos Chamber of Commerce and a co-owner of Stained Glass Overlay.

"Businesses damaged by the quake are now very fragile," she said. "They haven't been able to regain the (financial) strength they had before the earthquake."

The problems are evident in a multitude of ways.

"They have serious problems doing things like advertising, buying new inventory," Hibble said. "And with the economy the way it is, it is a precarious time for local businesses. Businesses need local support. The earthquake wiped out most peoples' reserves."

Businesses no longer have the money to make donations locally; they don't the ability to give as much as they might have in the past, Hibble said.

Many people put their businesses on the line after the quake.

"Most small businesses are people who have bought themselves a job," Hibble said. "It is a way to work and live."

See APTOS page 2 ►

(\$137.3 million).

## APTOS

► From Page 1

Aptos merchants lost an average of \$35,000 in inventory, whether it was a small grocery store, a liquor store, a clothing store or a glass shop. That is more than most can recover from.

"That's like being laid off for a year," she said. "Many put their homes or savings on the line. And in many cases, it used up the reserves they would have."