

Santa Cruz Veterans Memorial Building to reopen

Historic Buildings

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OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

SANTA CRUZ — Following a \$2.6 million seismic and structural repair job, the Santa Cruz Veterans Memorial Building is set to reopen Wednesday.

Officials abruptly closed the Historic Landmark when they learned in 2011 that the 1932 Spanish Colonial Revival building had serious structural issues. Building manager Tim Bratton noticed falling stucco at the building, located at 846 Front St. in Santa Cruz. Bratton called the county's General Services Department, and the building was closed indefinitely on Jan. 21, 2011, after subsequent inspections by local civil engineering companies William Fisher Architecture and The Streeter Group.

The closure came as the county was facing a \$17 million budget deficit and had few resources to address the needed repairs.

Experts have said the damage was likely a result of the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake.

In a letter to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, architect Bill Fisher said that another strong earthquake could pose a "risk of injury or death to the occupants of the auditorium."

Several veterans groups expressed concern that the inspection and subsequent condemnation were done without consulting them.

Tim McCormick, vice president of the United Veterans Council of Santa Cruz, cited a 1990 ruling that said veterans have priority over use of the building and should have been consulted during the inspection and closure of the build-



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The Santa Cruz Veterans Memorial Building is slated for reopening next week following a nearly three-year structural and seismic repair job.

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Before its closure, the Veterans Building housed services for veterans, and served as a place for classes, special community events and meetings for organizations such as the Resource Center for Nonviolence. Organizers say the building was one of a few places that offered a venue with room for 100-200 people.

According to the Santa Cruz County Administrative Office, about 40 people lost their jobs with the closure.

Officials are planning a Dec. 4 ceremony to reopen the building, which will include an honor guard.



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The entranceway to the Santa Cruz Veterans Memorial Building.