

Sesnon House restoration set to start

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APTOS — As the fifth anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake nears, Cabrillo College is about begin rebuilding its historic Sesnon House.

Cabrillo officials said Monday night they hope work will start at the end of November.

The restoration could be complete in six months, said Pegi Ard, vice president for business.

The college Governing Board awarded the contract to repair the building to Steve Baptista of Carmel on Monday.

Baptista submitted a bid of \$676,760, more than the Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved, according to college officials.

"I do believe there is room for negotiation," Ard told the board.

After lengthy negotiations, FEMA has agreed to contribute \$464,501 for the project.

The federal agency, she said, is willing to pay for earthquake damage and bringing the structure up to code.

The agency, however, has not been willing to pay for problems that existed before the earthquake such as termite damage, according to Ard.

College officials plan to meet with federal representatives to discuss the allocation.

The college also has been working with the Cabrillo Foundation to secure donations to enhance the historic nature of the building, Ard said.

"All repair work will be very sensitive to the historic nature of this building and will be reviewed for compliance with the secretary of the interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties," Ard wrote to the Governing Board.

The two-story building, which is on the county and state registers of

historic buildings, sustained significant damage in the Oct. 17, 1989, earthquake. It has not been occupied since.

The house was built in 1911 by Mary Porter and William T. Sesnon, the daughter and son-in-law of a wealthy entrepreneur and banker in Soquel.

The building, on the lower part of campus, had been occupied by the college since 1979. It housed the community education office, the Cabrillo Foundation and several community organizations.

The college offices have since moved to portable trailers, and the community groups have found new homes.

Liz Irwin, director of marketing and communications, said there has not been a final determination on who will occupy the repaired Sesnon House.

She said it was likely it would accommodate community meetings.