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A-2—Santa Cruz Sentinel — Tuesday, Nov. 7, 1989

# Trailers arrive at Fort Ord

## Installation may be delayed

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11-7-89

WATSONVILLE — The first of 150 emergency trailers for families left homeless from the Loma Prieta earthquake have arrived at Fort Ord, but they won't be available here until a trailer park is built.

"The first eight have come in to Fort Ord and three more are due within the hour," said Bill Villa, public information officer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Monday afternoon. "We'll keep shipping until all 100 are here."

Villa said it will "take anywhere from 30 to 45 days to get the park set up" and that the trailers won't come to Watsonville until then.

FEMA initially said it was sending 100 trailers, but agency spokesman Merl Moore said Monday that number had been upped to 150.

But city Planning Director Maureen Owens said she didn't think it will take that long to prepare a site.

The city's top pick for an emergency trailer park is 2½ acres behind the county annex on Freedom Boulevard. The area already has sewer lines, but will need to be graded and prepared much like a subdivision.

Site preparation will be done by Caltrans, while the state Department of Housing and Community Development will manage the units.

FEMA will assign families to the 12-

by-60-foot trailers, and is assessing families' needs at the shelters.

The trailers almost didn't make it at all. The middle of last week, FEMA officials told city representatives that they didn't see a need for them.

The breakthrough came Wednesday night when U.S. Rep. Leon Panetta, D-Carmel Valley, called the White House and demanded the trailers be sent.

The trailers will only be used as "a last resort" if no other housing is available within a 35-mile radius, according to Owens.

FEMA's resistance to providing the trailers has angered some of the city's Latino leaders.

"FEMA does not want to bring them in," said Cruz Gomez, a candidate in the Dec. 5 City Council election. "They're used to dealing with the two-adult, two-children families, with two cars.

"But when you have two to three families per unit, limited transportation, language barriers, school situations and odd working hours, you need trailers here, not housing somewhere else. They don't understand that," Gomez said.

FEMA has already begun to distribute rental checks of \$950 a month to some of the homeless families to use in relocating. If families cannot find shelter, they will qualify for a trailer, according to Owens.

"FEMA will attempt to find people housing first. If they can't find it, they will attempt to find another place, or they may offer a trailer," Owens said. "But people can't reject FEMA's choice of housing or they lose their eligibility."

In some cases, Owens said, it may mean that families are forced to "leave the city of Watsonville."