

A-4 — Thursday, April 18, 1991 — Santa Cruz Sentinel

Auto dealer sells to Canfield

By MARK BERGSTROM
Sentinel staff writer

CAPITOLA — Local car dealers Lee Courtright and Charles Canfield have agreed to purchase the Mercedes, Jeep-Eagle, Porsche-Audi and Isuzu dealerships from Steve Bergstrom.

Courtright and Canfield, who are partners in the local Toyota and Volkswagen dealerships, have agreed to terms with Bergstrom, Courtright said Wednesday, but the purchases must be approved by the manufacturers.

Courtright said that approval is expected within two months. In the meantime, he said he has entered into a management agreement with Bergstrom to run the Mercedes, Jeep-Eagle, Porsche-Audi

and Isuzu dealerships at the Capitola Auto Plaza.

At one time Bergstrom, who advertised himself as the "Giant of Santa Cruz" on a billboard near Scotts Valley, owned a string of local dealerships, including Buick, GMC, Mercedes, Toyota, Subaru, Porsche-Audi, Isuzu, Honda and Acura.

In recent years, he has terminated franchise agreements with some and sold others until he now just operates the Acura dealership. Bergstrom also owns Almaden Honda in San Jose.

Courtright came to Santa Cruz in 1972 and purchased the Datsun (now Nissan) dealership. In 1979 he bought the Dodge dealership.

With partner Charles Canfield,

who is president of the Seaside Co. which owns the Boardwalk, Courtright purchased the Toyota dealership in 1985 and the Volkswagen dealership in 1987.

Putting together strings of dealerships, Courtright said, "is the wave of the future in the car business." A big reason, he said, is the amount of capital it takes to operate a dealership.

Another reason is what Courtright sees as a change in consumer buying habits. "People are choosing dealers more than product lines. They're buying where they have had good service in the past."

Courtright said he and Canfield are not looking to expand beyond the Santa Cruz area. "Both my

partner and I are very interested in serving Santa Cruz County," Courtright said.