

✓ New SC gay and lesbian center opens

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SANTA CRUZ — The new Santa Cruz Lesbian and Gay Community Center was officially dedicated Sunday with songs, poetry readings and a welcome from Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt.

More than 100 people either crammed into the center's quarters at 1332 Commerce Lane or stood outside as a light rain fell.

"This is a historic event for Santa Cruz as well as the Lesbian and Gay communities," said Mindy Storch, coordinator of the LGCC programs and services committee.

The center has been nearly two years in the making, Storch said.

The organization has been in existence since the spring of 1988, offering social events, programs and services for the gay community and its goal has always been to have a home of its own, Storch said.

Previous activities have been held in

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— SC Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt

other community spaces such as Loudon Nelson, the YWCA and the Veteran's Hall, Storch said.

The new space includes a large reception area for meetings or browsing in the center's library, which features a community-wide resource directory, Storch said.

There are also two meeting rooms, one large and one small, said Storch, in addition to a 130-square foot office avail-

able for rent inside.

The center will continue to sponsor monthly potlucks, lesbian gatherings, men's groups and other meetings, as well as expand its programs and services to the community, Storch said.

Storch estimates there are thousands of local gays who will benefit from the center's opening.

"Right now, we have 750 people on our mailing list who are actively in-

involved in various events, programs and services we're providing," she said.

Keeping the center in operation now that it has officially opened is the next big task, Storch said.

Monthly rent on the center is \$1,000 and total overhead is about \$2,000, said Storch, who added that the workers are all volunteer. Donations were being actively solicited at Sunday's gathering.

Mayor Wormhoudt said she was pleased to welcome the group to the downtown area.

"I'm really glad the Lesbian and Gay Community Center is in downtown Santa Cruz," she said. "I think it's a really healthy sign for the downtown to have a community of people who give of themselves to the larger community."

"I think it's really important for people to have a place to come together," she said. "And I think it was important for me to be here today and be a part of this program, especially when it's clear that on a national