

Summit store will return, owner says

Mountain residents without store since quake

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SUMMIT — The 100-year-old Summit Market will reopen, according to owner Darrell Osborn. But the store's elderly wood frame building will have to be demolished, finishing a job begun by the Oct. 17 earthquake.

The store was hard hit by the quake, which emptied shelves, destroyed equipment and shattered the building's cement foundation. Experts say it is not possible to save the building, a former packing shed which was moved three times before coming to rest at its present location, Osborne said.

Reopening the Summit Market would be a huge relief to many mountain residents. With the market closed, Summit Ridge residents must now drive to Redwood Estates, Soquel, Santa Cruz or Los Gatos to buy any necessities. And the narrow, windy roads are often closed by landslides in the winter.

"We're still in the planning stages for a new store," Osborne said. "We're putting

together a preliminary plan to show the county. I hope we don't get any discouragement from them."

Osborn hopes to replace the present 5,000-square-foot building, which houses the grocery store, a video shop and a real estate office, with two buildings. A 9,000-square-foot structure would house a grocery store, delicatessen and video shop. Another 5,000-square-foot building would hold office space.

Osborn is hoping to install metal prefabricated buildings with attractive facades, both because they would be inexpensive and because they're relatively fireproof.

"It sounds weird, metal buildings, but actually they look pretty nice," he said. "We'll have to see what the county says."

Osborn tried to rebuild the cramped little store "six or seven years ago," he said. "We ran against so many obstacles (from the county) the whole time that we got discouraged, we finally gave up after putting about \$50,000 into it."

But Osborn is optimistic about his chances in getting his plans approved by the county now, in part because Supervisor Jan Beautz has vowed to assist him get through the county's planning process, he said.

Osborne operated the store's meat department for 11 years before he and his wife Karen took over the grocery store 4 years ago. The quake would probably have wiped them out if they hadn't purchased earthquake insurance less than a month before the Oct. temblor.

"Someone must have been looking out for me," he said. "A few weeks before the big quake there was a little temblor, and my friends who run the Redwood Estates store lost everything off their shelves. I only lost a few bottles of wine. They sent me pictures of it and I thought 'oh my God.'"

Osborn bowls regularly with his insurance agent, Jim Woods, who he asked about the cost of earthquake insurance — before the big quake.

"Jim called me back the next day and said it would cost about \$50 a month, and I said great, put it on my policy," he said. "I only made one payment before the quake. Without the insurance I probably would have had to go bankrupt, I don't think I could have afforded to keep the property."

Osborn is upbeat about the future, although he doesn't know when the new store is likely to open.

"I love working up there, and it's a great business," he said. "I probably made more per square foot up there than any other business in the county."

No major slides reported from rain

SANTA CRUZ — The weekend storm brought needed rain, but left area mountainsides intact, fire officials said Monday.

No major landslides were reported in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and though dozens of minor landslips showered rocks and boulders onto mountain roads, no roads were reported closed, even temporarily.

Geologists are worried that the hundreds of cracks and fissures opened in the earth by the Oct. 17 earthquake will allow rainwater to saturate weakened hillsides instead of running off, increasing the danger of mudslides. But an intensive effort to fill the cracks has apparently paid off. Two out-of-state geologists stalking fissures Monday found that most have been filled.

"We're out here measuring cracks," said Arvid Johnson, a geology professor from Purdue University. "But they seem to be hard to find. Most of them have been filled up, which is tough for us."

— Maria Gaura