

Skyview 'officially is not for sale'

AUTO PLAZA - S.C.

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SANTA CRUZ — Spokesmen for the Skyview Drive-In Theater's owners Saturday denied reports that four Santa Cruz car dealers are on the verge of buying the property and turning it into the county's second major auto center.

"The property officially is not for sale," said Victor Camacho, general manager of Salinas-based Skyview Drive-In Theaters.

He said the dealers had made an offer on the property, but said, "We get offers all the time."

North Bay Ford's Bill Winterhalter confirmed to a reporter last week that dealers are seriously interested in relocating to the drive-in site, and said "a final decision"

was "about 10 days away." Another said that besides the drive-in, one other piece of property was being considered.

Winterhalter, reached by The Sentinel Saturday, declined to comment on the record.

The drive-in property is also the site of a large and popular weekend flea market. Camacho said flea market vendors and patrons have been greatly disturbed by reports in The Sentinel Thursday saying a deal for the property is in the works.

Also at stake are an estimated \$500,000 a year in sales-tax revenues the city of Santa Cruz would lose if the four car dealers — Santa Cruz Motors, Santa Cruz Nissan-Dodge, North Bay Ford and Toyota of Santa Cruz — locate out of the city limits. Santa Cruz County would gain the

revenues if the dealers move to an unincorporated part of the county, such as the Skyview Drive-In property.

General manager Camacho said drive-in property owners Marvin Martins of Santa Cruz and Evelyn Martins of Salinas, brother and sister, have been attending an out-of-town convention this week and were unavailable for comment. He described them as very upset with published reports, "and I still have bite marks to prove it."

"This has been a family-owned business for 40 years, and they have no intention of selling it," Camacho said. "That doesn't mean they'll never sell it if someone comes in with a huge offer. But they have a very profitable business and they

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have children and anticipate passing it on to their children some day."

"We get offers all the time on this property," Camacho continued, "we get letters on a continuous basis from real estate companies asking to put the property up for sale. We always say no, but from time to time we still get offers — and I mean offers, ready to put money in escrow."

"I can't say they'll never sell the property," he said, "if somebody offers you \$20 million you are going to sit down and look at the offer. But we are definitely not in negotiations (with the car dealers) at this time."

Edwin Tobolowsky, the Martins' Dallas-based attorney, confirmed Camacho's statements in a telephone interview Saturday.

"It takes a seller and a buyer," Tobolowsky said. "We don't have any contracts or anything. We intend to operate our theater and our swap-meet and if somebody is interested in buying the property, they're not the first to be interested."

Camacho said Kaiser Permanente made an offer on the property last

year, but the offer was withdrawn before serious negotiations were undertaken.

Tobolowsky confirmed that "we've received a letter" from the Santa Cruz car dealers, "and we've since talked with them."

But when asked if the dealers' offer was being given serious consideration, he paused before saying, "They may have an idea and they may be trying to explore it, but I would say 'no.'"

Camacho said he has been getting frantic calls from the 461 vendors who operate out of the flea market. He said proceeds from the flea market make up roughly 60 percent of the company's profits. He said people from a rival flea market were distributing leaflets at the drive-in Saturday claiming the flea market would close soon, and inviting vendors to relocate in the rival's flea market.

"This isn't an ordinary flea market," Camacho said. "Most of the vendors here know each other and there's a lot of good stuff out there, not junk. We have senior citizens out here coming unglued over this."