

City's quake fund still getting money

By CHELA ZABIN
STAFF WRITER

Ten months after the Oct. 17 earthquake, contributions are still trickling in to Watsonville's Earthquake Relief Fund.

Most recently, the City of San Jose sent Watsonville \$21,000 from its Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund, money generated in part from the Bill Graham-KQED concert fund raiser in November. Big Creek Lumber sent \$3,500, a Greek-American businessmen's group from San Jose and a Japanese-American businessmen's association from the Bay Area sent checks.

Earlier, most of the contributions were sent by individuals, typically making donations of \$5

and \$10. Those have all but ceased, finance director Terry Stigall said this morning. Checks coming in now tend to be from organizations.

The city has collected \$970,000 total. Stigall said it now has \$766,000 in its account, most of which is already committed.

Some \$850,000 has been earmarked for grants, most of it to individuals and mostly to repair and renovate homes damaged in the earthquake, Stigall said. Typically, grants to individuals have ranged from about \$1,000 to about \$25,000.

Three agencies, the YWCA, the Interfaith Satellite Shelter Program and the Santa Cruz

See GRANTS page 2 ►

GRANTS

► From page 1

Housing Authority, received money from the fund. Seventy-three grants went to individuals. Stigall said eight or nine major reconstruction jobs have been completed using city relief funds and three more are very close to being completed.

Grants are given after applicants have exhausted all other funding options and still don't have enough to make necessary repairs. Once the city approves a grant, it typically sets the money aside and pays the contractor when a bill is submitted.

A number of people who have been awarded money by the city are waiting for contractors, who

still have their hands full with earthquake-related projects, Stigall said. Most of those waiting are people with major repair work, he said. People who just needed plaster work done, for example, have found it easier to get repairs completed.

In some cases, the city has helped people who were in particularly dire straits, for example, people who have been paying both rent and a mortgage while waiting for repair work to be done and who could no longer keep up both payments. A few people lost jobs, homes and most, if not all, of their possessions in the quake and qualified for a bit more, he said.

The city is referring those still in need of funds to the CALDAP program, which can be reached at 728-1288.