

# a Cruz/Monterey

EARTHQUAKE 1989 - WATSONVILLE - REBUILDING SJM 7-2-91 1B

## Last families leave quake trailers

By Bob Johnson  
Special to the Mercury News

The last three Watsonville families to live in FEMA trailers brought in after the Loma Prieta earthquake packed up and left Monday.

One family removed belongings from the last trailer at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds late Monday afternoon and, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, moved into a rented house in Watsonville. Two other families left trailers at St. Francis School and the Crestview Avenue lot Monday.

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Nearly all families that used the trailers have remained in the Watsonville area.

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Nearly two months after the October 1989 earthquake, FEMA offered the first of 120 trailers to Watsonville families displaced by the temblor. About a year later, tensions were sparked in a confrontation when residents prevented FEMA from removing empty trailers, which many residents had

hoped to buy.

Patsy Hernandez, a case management worker with the Red Cross office in Watsonville, said only two families left the Watsonville area.

Roughly 90 percent of the families were able to find housing because, Hernandez

said, they met the low-income requirements to qualify for rent vouchers from the Santa Cruz County Housing Authority.

Housing Authority Director Mary James said 119 families have obtained homes through the voucher program. James knew of only seven families from the trailers that did not meet the requirements for the program.

More than 100 trailers already have been trucked back to a federal yard in Texas. Ten others are at a staging area at Fort Ord. Only seven remain at the four Watsonville-area sites.