

Aptos residents silently salvage possessions

By CHELA ZABIN
STAFF WRITER

If Aptos residents huddled close to home last night, they weren't staying home this morning.

In the hardest hit area in Midcounty, Aptos Village, where shops on a block-long section on the west side of Soquel had sunk and pulled away from their foundations, shopkeepers and employees were crossing police lines to salvage what they could. No one was in the mood for talking.

"Maybe later," said a man outside of Aptos Dry Good, "I just want to get my computer out."

At the end of the cordoned-off block, the Exxon station had opened, and with the help of a generator, was filling gas tanks. A long line formed almost instantly.

The Rancho Del Mar shopping center was also hard hit and fire fighters were called there first to treat injured people. Capt. Mike Conrad at Aptos/La Selva Fire Station 1 said that all available fire fighters — 33 — were on duty last night.

There had been no real fires in the Aptos/La Selva area, he said, except for a few brief grease fires that broke

was taken up with treating people injured by falling debris and glass and in checking gas mains, he said.

Many people didn't know how to turn off their own gas, he said, but what fire fighters found was that the people who did went around to all their neighbors and helped them out. Others came to the fire station for instruction.

"We didn't have any communications last night," he said. "So we just drove slowly up and down the streets, hoping that if people needed us they would flag us down."

Rio Del Mar didn't seem as badly hit as other parts of Aptos. Many of the houses along Rio Del Mar Boulevard and Sumner Avenue seemed intact, and many had brick chimneys still standing. A few tiles were missing from the roofs of buildings in the Deer Park Plaza Shopping Center, where, by 9:45 a.m., hundreds of people had lined up in front of Deluxe food, scheduled to open at 10.

At the Gottshalks store in the Rancho Del Mar Shopping Center, general manager Steve Borasi was surveying the damage. Windows had been broken, and pieces of plaster roofing material had fallen down on the racks of clothes. No one had been

North Monterey County

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One person was killed while working on a water tank in the Springfield District of North Monterey County and Pajaro was evacuated because of a gas leak last night in the aftermath of the earthquake. No fires occurred and no one was injured.

Jorge Gutierrez, 46, died when he was trapped after falling from the top of a large water tank on which he was working on Jensen Road when the quake struck.

The evacuation began at 6 p.m. and the leak was capped by midnight, Monterey County Sheriff's Department's Lt. Fred Wilson said. Residents were allowed to

return to their homes after midnight.

In all, North Monterey County fared better than other local areas with little structural damage other than a few cracks. All roads in Monterey County were open this morning and power was restored south of Gonzales.

The only major damage occurred in Moss Landing where the road sank a foot below the bridge on Highway 1. A berm has been created to allow cars to travel through Moss Landing.

The San Jose Mercury News reported this morning that part of the roof at the Moss Landing Marine Lab collapsed, and a bridge to the island known as the Spit was damaged.

estimated the damage to the Aptos stores at \$100,000 assuming that no structural damage had been done. He said that the store would likely remain closed for three to four days.

Borasi said he was in a managers'

store when the earthquake hit.

"The power went out and then it hit," he said. "The tables started shaking and some people were thrown."

Borasi said that all 150 Santa Cruz

the store without a hitch. Gottshalks was one of the least damaged of all the stores on the Pacific Garden Mall, he said, but he estimated the damage there at at least \$500,000.

"It was a miracle that the building didn't collapse," he said.

A strong smell was rising from a liquor store next to Gottshalks in Aptos, where workers were cleaning up broken bottles.

"This is a great place to get drunk," said a man looking at the newspaper rack in front. "You don't even have to buy anything, just smell it."

A long line was forming at the Rancho Del Mar Safeway, where ice and bread were being given out for free, and other food items and supplies were being sold outdoors.

Dottie Sargent, a Seascope resident standing at the end of the line, said her house didn't suffer much structural damage, but that all her possessions were thrown around and broken and that a closet door popped off its hinges. Sargent had a box of firewood in her cart and was planning on cooking outdoors on her grill.

"I just want a cup of coffee," she confessed.

"I'd give a couple bucks for a cup of coffee," said someone standing next

"Yeah, someone ought to come around with a cart selling coffee," said another.

The new Temple Beth El, under construction just north of Cabrillo College, didn't seem to have suffered much. All the Cabrillo offices were closed, but the campus didn't seem to have suffered much either.

Cabrillo College student Tom Devine was on campus looking for someone to let him into a building so he could get to his locker.

He'd been on campus, waiting to talk to an English teacher when the quake hit.

"There was this loud noise like all the buildings were going to fall down, but they didn't," he said. "The ground started swaying back and forth and my first impulse was to get out to some open space. Another English teacher followed me out and we just stood there and looked at each other like, 'What are we going to do now?'"

A lot of students and faculty gathered in the grassy square in front of the cafeteria and stayed there a while, he said.

"People look different when this kind of thing happens," he said. "It's not just take-it-for-granted everyday life. They stick together. It's kind of