

# Work begins on Soquel bridge project



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

A two-year work project to rebuild the Bargetto Bridge in Soquel began on Friday.

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*Bridges*

A two-year project to replace downtown's Bargetto Bridge broke ground this week.

The \$3.5 million project is aimed at increasing flood protection for the Soquel village area. Construction will run in two stages.

**SOQUEL** One side of the bridge will be replaced between now and October. The second stage will begin next summer and be done in fall 2002.

The staggered work schedule is necessary to comply with environmental protections in the creek, said John Presleigh, assistant director of the Santa Cruz County Public Works Department's transportation division. Work is not allowed during winter.

Vehicle traffic on Soquel Drive has been

confined to one side of bridge and will result in traffic delays. The prospect of slow-moving cars in front of Play It Again Sports doesn't thrill owner Tom Frankl.

"It's sort of like a grin and bear it situation," he said.

Morning and afternoon traffic could tie things up but for most of the day his customers shouldn't be too inconvenienced, he said.

The store's adjacent parking lot will remain open during the project. The construction may even be good for business, he said.

"We're hoping to equip all bridge workers with the best sporting equipment in town," he said.

Ernie Kinzli, owner of Ernie's Casting Pond, can see and hear the roadwork from the window of his fishing store. As he wound

fishing line around a fly reel he was unconcerned about the impact of the bridge work on his business.

"Most of my customers don't seem to be in a hurry," he said. (Fishermen) have patience."

When complete, the new bridge will be about 2 feet taller than the old bridge. Unlike the old bridge, it will not have a center pillar, reducing the potential for log jams and improving fish passage, Presleigh said.

The project also includes new turn lanes and aesthetic improvements to the area.

Work crews filled the Soquel Creek bed under the bridge with dirt and rock. The creek now passes under the fill through two black plastic pipes.

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