

✓ Auto dealerships fill out portfolio

AUTO PLAZA

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SANTA CRUZ — Charles Canfield says he got into the automobile business by accident.

Although owns the local Toyota dealership and is a partner in a Volkswagen dealership, and has been involved in the effort to build a major new auto plaza somewhere in the county, Canfield said it all began in 1985 when he was trying to find a parking lot for his Seaside Co. employees.

He found a lot available by the Toyota dealership at Front and Laurel streets, but was told the lot was only available if he agreed to buy the auto dealership as well.

"We went ahead and did that," Canfield said recently.

The Volkswagen dealership came next, when the business's owner came to Canfield and partner Lee Courtright in 1987 to see if they were interested.

They were.

"It's like any business, there's advantages to having more than one," Canfield said.

Canfield also said he got into the auto-plaza business the same way, sort of by happenstance. "One thing leads to another," Canfield said.

When he met with Toyota executives while he was trying to purchase the auto dealership franchise he was told a condition of the purchase was that the deal-

ership be moved to a better location.

That eventually led to his joining in the effort to purchase the Skyview Drive-in theater in mid-county as the site for an auto plaza, an effort that recently collapsed after objections were raised to how the deal was going to be financed with the county and after protests by flea market operators and customers who used the Skyview on weekends.

Now Canfield says that the city of Scotts Valley has the inside track toward landing an auto center.

Canfield also is part owner of the Kinzli property, at Santa Cruz' border with Live Oak. The spectacular, ocean-view property above the Small Craft Harbor was initially envisioned as the site of an auto plaza, but political and legal realities soon doomed that plan.

With Courtright and another local auto dealer, Bill Winterhalter, Canfield purchased the 62-acre property for \$3.5 million in 1987.

Canfield declined to say what will come of the Kinzli lands, but the three owners have been cautiously trying to work their way through local planning and governmental agencies in an effort to do something with the property, which forms one of the city's bordering open-space greenbelts.