

Cabrillo College - 1990

# Cabrillo's new campus to open in Watsonville

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Sentinel staff writer

**WATSONVILLE** — Students who registered for Cabrillo College's spring semester Monday will be among the first to take classes in a former post office, now a Watsonville satellite campus.

Judith Guerrero only wishes Cabrillo's new Watsonville center, on Union Street next to the plaza, had come a little earlier. Guerrero has been taking Cabrillo classes in Watsonville for the past three years at the downtown La Manzanita Center.

"It's going to be a lot better," she said of the spacious two-story white building still undergoing renovations before classes start later this month. La Manzanita center "was too small, the rooms weren't together and were

too stuffy."

For the 1990 Watsonville High School graduate, who enters San Jose State this semester, classes near home and work helped her continue her education.

"It helps you decide what to do," said Guerrero, 21.

Registration began last month for Cabrillo's Watsonville classes, and will continue until classes are filled. In-person registration will be at Cabrillo's main campus in Aptos Jan. 18-20. Classes begin Jan. 24.

Along with Watsonville resident Hank Drabin, who signed up for classes at the new center Monday, most of the students attending Cabrillo classes in Watsonville are adults. Drabin began taking computer classes a few years ago to learn skills for both job and private use, after

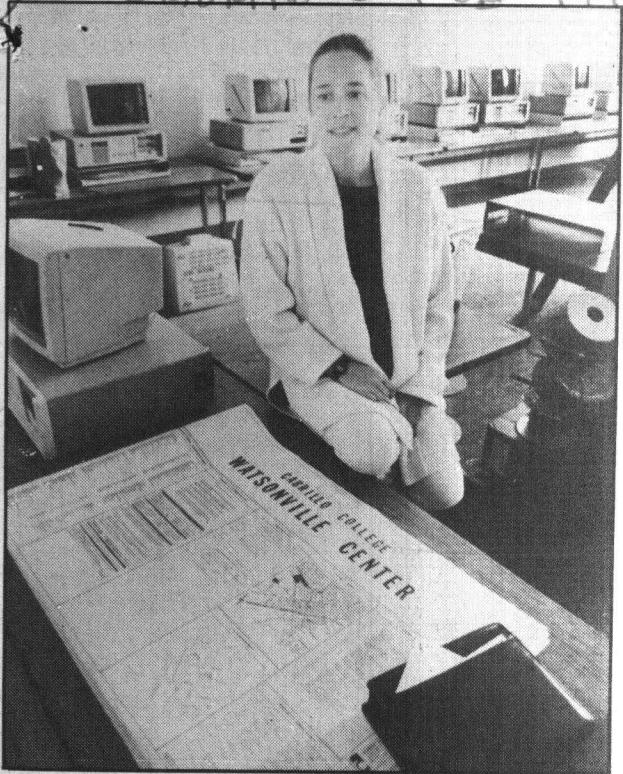
working for years in Pajaro Valley's agriculture industry.

Beatriz Carrillo is a Spanish speaker who began taking English classes last summer at Radcliff Adult School. At the Watsonville Center, she plans to take both English grammar and conversation classes.

"Before, I wasn't able to take classes because my kids were at home, but now they're in school and it's my turn," said Carrillo, a Watsonville mother of four.

The spacious lobby, smelling of wet paint, retains its past look with teller-type windows where students sign up for registration and services. A glass-covered bulletin board that held public notices in the post office is repainted and will be used to post student notices.

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Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Rachel Mayo, Watsonville center director.

## New Cabrillo center opening

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Most of the downstairs has been converted into six classrooms, including a computer room and a dance room lined with a hardwood floor.

The 10,000-square-foot facility, more than double the size of the former Watsonville site, also has a small bookstore and a snack bar area. Upstairs there is a seventh classroom, and offices and tutorial rooms that overlook the downtown plaza.

Cabrillo has offered classes at the downtown La Manzanita Center since 1987, making higher education more accessible to Pajaro Valley residents while boosting the number of Latino students. Since the center opened, Latino enrollment at Aptos-based Cabrillo College rose from 5 to 15 percent of

the student population.

Because of the expansion, Watsonville enrollment is expected to jump from 850 to 1,200 this year, said Rachel Mayo, director of Cabrillo's Watsonville center. To receive state funding as an official off-campus center, enrollment needs be at 2,000, equaling about 500 full-time students. Until the center is considered an official program, it will receive money from Cabrillo's general fund, which amounts to about \$170,000 a year.

Mayo plans to expand enrollment by offering a variety of classes at the Watsonville site. Often, students sign up for one class in Watsonville, but have three classes offered only at the main campus in Aptos. They choose to take all their classes in Aptos because it's more convenient, Mayo said.

"We try to offer as many general education classes we can offer to try to give students as much choice as possible either for an (associate in arts) degree or to go on to four year college," said Mayo.

Because most Watsonville students take evening classes, the center also plans to target high school students and others who can attend school during the day.

Other classes will target Spanish-speakers and the area's large Latino population. These include ballet folklorico, Spanish for Spanish speakers, Chicano literature and bilingual computer classes.

The city bought the building in 1992 from the U.S. Postal Service for \$425,000. The city's Redevelopment Agency will pay \$900,000 for renovation.