

Loma Prieta quake anniversary is today

Earthquake 24 yrs. later EP 10-17-13
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WATSONVILLE — Today marks the 24th anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake that rocked the Monterey and San Francisco bay areas. The quake measured 7.1 on the Richter scale, killed 63 people (seven of them in the Monterey Bay area), injured 3,757 people and caused an estimated \$7 billion in damage.

In Watsonville, 250 homes were destroyed and another 800 damaged. Every major road in and out of the county was closed or partially blocked and all power was out for a day, and longer in some areas. Telephone and water service was sporadic for a week.

The quake, centered in The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, struck just after 5 p.m.

The temblor tested emergency services across Santa Cruz County and spurred major

changes in emergency policies and procedures statewide.

The earthquake blocked highways 129, 17 and 152, effectively isolating the county. It also cracked one of the runways at the Watsonville Municipal Airport, leaving only one operational.

Still, the airport became an essential artery for the movement of supplies, food and people in and out of the county.