

Earthquake

Mobile home owners mop up and look ahead

By LANE WALLACE
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Last week's earthquake has put Bernard and Levita Hohman out of their mobile home, but it hasn't taken away their positive attitude or sense of humor.

"I was in the shower" when the quake hit, Mr. Hohman said with a laugh. As he and his wife chatted about their earthquake experiences, there was no sense of despair.

"If you sit around and cry you just make yourself miserable," said Mrs. Hohman.

The Hohmans, whose home was knocked off its foundation, are in the same predicament as hundreds of other residents of mobile home parks.

At Rancho Cerritos, where the Hohmans live, all 145 coaches were damaged, park owner Bill Zanker said, and two-thirds of the people are still out of their homes. In two other parks, Monterey Vista, on Holm Road, and Pinto Lake Mobile Estates, the majority of coaches were also damaged.

At Meadows Manor and Portola Heights, both on Freedom Boulevard, there was damage, but it was less extensive than at the other parks.

At Rancho Cerritos, behind Watsonville Square Shopping Center, two coaches burned down, one of them minutes after the quake hit. Zanker estimated that all but two or three of the remaining coaches in the 145-unit park can be repaired.

Mobile home residents have one big advantage over those who live

in conventional housing.

"Most mobile homes have earthquake insurance," Zanker said; the opposite is true of those who live in conventional housing.

Zanker said damaged gas lines have been repaired, but he needs state approval before he can hook the units up.

The Rancho Cerritos residents who have been displaced have found a variety of alternative housing, Zanker said, including motels and staying with friends and relatives.

After spending several days with relatives, the Hohmans decided to move into a motel last night. They don't know when they'll be able to

get back to Rancho Cerritos, but said they'd like to return.

"Where else could you go?" said Mrs. Hohman, ticking off such disasters and hurricanes and tornadoes that hit other areas. The people on the Eastern Seaboard "didn't expect Hugo," she said.

The Hohmans could even joke that they "moved too early."

They've lived in Watsonville 20 years, and the house they moved from on Calabasas Road 11 months ago wasn't damaged. Mr. Hohman retired from Green Giant four years ago, and Rancho Cerritos is their retirement home.

Judy Lutenske, who has lived in Rancho Cerritos for 11 years, said the quake "seems to have united

people." Lutenske said she was already familiar with the people on her block, but now has met those from other parts of the park.

"We supported each other," she said.

Rancho Cerritos has a high percentage of retired people, but there are people from the age of 18 on up living in the park.



This mobile home in the Rancho Cerritos mobile-home park in Watsonville shows the kind of damage mobile homes sustained.

Diane Varni