

# Mall businesses fight for attention

## Some merchants remaining on Pacific Avenue claim 'discrimination'

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SANTA CRUZ — Former mall merchants now ensconced in the Phoenix Pavilions are reporting some of their best business days ever.

However their brethren, whose stores have reopened on the partially open mall, are finding their once-choice locations are now off the beaten path and think too much attention has focused on the "tent people."

Some store owners, like Joy Kilner, owner of The Vault, must think of creative ways to draw customers to their back doors.

Because it is near the fenced off Palomar Inn, the front of The Vault remains behind a chainlink fence. The jewelry and woolens store is open and in good shape. The trouble is, Kilner explains, the only way to get there is through the back door, and that faces on an alley.

Kilner said some of the businesses in her neighborhood feel discriminated against because of the attention focused on the tent merchants.

"The point of this is all the attention shouldn't be focused on the tent people," she said.

"So much money is going to the tent people," she said. "Some of us have had grim circumstances too."

Heinz Biergarten Cafe and Restaurant next door is in the same predicament.

The ID Building, which holds down a key Pacific Garden Mall corner at Locust Street, is now out of the new normal flow of foot traffic. Next door, Graphix Gallery & Framing still has its Pacific Avenue storefront, but to get there one must walk a narrow pathway between the ID building and a fence, go around to the front and continue to the edge of another fence. Little signs on the fences notify potential customers that Graphix is indeed down there for the intrepid shopper and open for business.

To announce his shoe store is alive and well, Tom Jackson uses a huge "open" sign on a fence that blocks Pacific Avenue. Jackson opened for business the day after Thanksgiving like most of the other shopkeepers. Business so far is even with last year, he says.

Despite the destruction and displacement downtown, the Great Outdoor Clothing Store plans to open next week in a former

at Cathcart Street and Pacific Avenue. It is the first new store on the mall in five years, said Jim Foster, who owns the building with George Ow.

Store manager Glenn Graves said he is hoping for a Tuesday opening.

Great Outdoor Clothing is a subsidiary of Odyssey International, based in Hong Kong. It designs and manufactures clothing in China for major labels such as L.L. Bean, REI Co-op, Eddie Bauer and Lands End, Graves said. The

Santa Cruz store is a factory outlet with seconds, overruns, and first-grade merchandise, Graves said.

And in an attempt to boost local shopping, a group headed by UCSC dean of admissions Joe Allen gave out 50,000 gift tags to all downtown merchants.

The idea is to make it "politically correct" to shop in Santa Cruz, Allen said. The tags, which read "Santa Cruz Downtown Merry Merchants," will be given out with each item purchased.