

# Fox Theatre lobby to be used for stores

The owner of the Fox Theatre said this morning that the movie house will reopen in a couple of months, this time with one or more stores in what used to be the lobby.

Owner Hank Garcia said he would like to rent the new retail space, which will be about 1,500 square feet, to a deli or cafe. The entrance to the store or stores will be through the front. The old ticket kiosk and interior plaster mural featuring an apple harvest scene are being saved, construction workers on the site said.

Workers this morning were clearing out the lobby and a small retail store that has been adjacent to the theater.

The theater itself will begin showing movies with a new sound system, Garcia said. He is not yet sure if the theater will continue its practice of showing Spanish-language films once a week.

It will also be available for rent once again, he said. In the past, the theater has been used by the

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Kurt Ellison

Workers clear the ticket-booth area this morning.

## FOX

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Santa Cruz County Symphony, the Watsonville Band and the Cabrillo Music Festival.

Garcia has been rebuilding the Fox since the Oct. 17 earthquake. The damage included the loss of the rear wall — a wall it shared with the now-demolished Masonic Lodge.

The loss of the Masonic Lodge also opens up the question of where “green room” space will be found. Formerly, musicians waited in a room in the lodge before going on stage.

Garcia sought private financing for the repairs, he said, because he foresaw that government disaster relief would take too long to come through.

At its July 24 meeting, the Watsonville City Council directed staff to begin meeting with a citizen’s committee that has been working for years to purchase the Fox Theatre for preservation and public use.

The committee and the city staff plan to put together a report for the City Council spelling out the various ways it could buy the Fox using private grants and state money.

—Susanna Heckman

REFERENCE

Reg. Paj. 8-15-90