

# Tent city still haunts Highway 1

## Deadline for dismantling homeless encampment comes and goes

Homeless - 1990  
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SANTA CRUZ — Tent city, the campground for homeless people that is visible from Highway 1, was supposed to be dismantled Thursday, but campers who refused to move won themselves a partial reprieve.

The reprieve is good until Dec. 1, when the campground will close for good and be replaced by 10 trailers.

The campground, located in a field off River Street, serves as an open-air shelter for about 150 people from March to November. It was scheduled to close this week when the Santa Cruz National Guard Armory and a church-shelter program opened for the winter.

But the opening of the armory was delayed until Dec. 1 by Gov. Pete Wilson as part of a statewide postponement, according to Darrell Darling, of the Citizen's Committee for the Homeless. Until then, the armory will only be open during rainy and cold weather.

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— Paul Marceau,  
*director of the Interfaith Satellite Shelter Program*

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Campground operators originally ordered tents at the campground to be taken down anyway and said those who didn't comply by 10 a.m. Thursday would be ticketed.

"It's not just the tents. They set up camps, with all their worldly possessions," said Paul Marceau, director of the Interfaith Satellite Shelter Program, the organization that runs the campground.

Marceau said the camps had to be dismantled so that storage equipment could be moved off the field and to the armory.

But with more than a dozen tents still standing after the deadline Thursday, he backed off to avoid a confrontation. "Basically we're keeping the status quo," said Marceau. "We're riding with things until the armory opens."

Police were not called and no tickets were issued.

Robert Norse, an activist with Food Not Bombs, said some campers left after being threatened with tickets. Many of them left belongings behind.

"It's preposterous," said Norse. "It's ridiculous to not make it available in

inclement weather when there is not any other competing use for it."

Karen Gillette, director of the adjacent Homeless Day Resource Center, said the brief closing was accompanied by crying, upset children and angry adults.

Marceau agreed closing the campground has been hard. "It's rougher this year because the campground thing became more entrenched. People became more possessive and territorial and saw it as a right, not simply an accommodation we were trying to make for people."

When it closes in December, however, it won't be back.

The Citizen's Committee for the Homeless, which owns the field property, has been given 10 double-wide mobile homes from Stanford University, said Darling.

Those trailers will be installed on the field as transitional housing for 44 people as soon as a city use permit is obtained, said Darling.