

## **Watsonville hospital quake repair bill hits \$40 million**

Watsonville Community Hospital's earthquake-repair bill is now being estimated at \$40 million, hospital vice president Barbara Shingai said this morning.

Because \$40 million is more than half of what it would cost to build a new building, the hospital will probably talk with FEMA and the Office of Emergency Services about whether it makes more sense to start over or complete the repairs, she said.

The hospital has already spent about \$2 million on repairing damage, which include serious problems with the hospital's sewage system. Despite the amount of damage the hospital suffered, the building has been inspected and deemed safe a number of times.

The cost estimate includes the \$2 million and was prepared for the hospital by a team of architects and engineers.

Shingai said one of the reasons the cost was so high is that the hospital will remain operational during repairs. In order to do that, the hospital will have to implement an 18-phase repair plan that would take from 5½ to seven years to complete.

If the hospital decides it makes more sense to construct another building, it will not tear down the existing one. The current hospital would be converted to another use, hospital officials have said.

—Chela Zabin

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