



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

The main dining area of Zuniga's Mexican Food restaurant, 100 Aviation Way, is shown empty Tuesday after the long-standing popular business abruptly closed Tuesday morning.

Zuniga's Mexican Food closes

By TARMO HANNULA
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

Zuniga's Mexican Food restaurant at Watsonville Municipal Airport abruptly closed Tuesday. The long-standing eatery, established in Watsonville in 1953, has been a cornerstone at the airport terminal since the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, when Michael's restaurant closed at the same airport location.

Airport manager Don French said he was informed of the closing early Tuesday.

"Zuniga's is a destination restaurant for a lot of people," he said. "This will definitely have an impact. We're hoping to get another restaurant in there as soon as possible."

Zuniga's was owned by Larry Brindley.

French said he was unsure as to why Zuniga's was closing but surmised that financial reasons may have been at the root of the action.

Zuniga's offered an extensive menu of Mexican food favorites and featured a bar that became a Watsonville institution over the years.

French said Zuniga's became a regular eatery for numerous commercial and private pilots and passengers. The restaurant, with indoor and outdoor seating, offered sweeping views of the airport and surrounding Santa Cruz Mountains and often served as a meeting spot for patrons of the airport.