

Grocery Outlet preps new store

Bus G *3.26.15*
\$1.4M makeover on Morrissey Boulevard underway along with hiring

By Jondi Gumz

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SANTA CRUZ » The transformation of what used to be the Eastside post office into Grocery Outlet is well underway with San Jose contractor Tilton Pacific Construction undertaking a \$1.4 million remodeling job.

"It will be a completely different place," Steve Campbell promised of the soon-to-be Grocery

Outlet at 120 Morrissey Blvd.

The U.S. Postal Service moved its retail branch to 1148 Soquel Ave., formerly Jerry's Sports, in January after its lease expired.

Campbell and his wife Blanca opened a Grocery Outlet in Seattle five years ago. That store got kudos from customers for being clean and well-stocked and having friendly employees along with discount prices.

The couple was asked by Grocery Outlet to open the Santa

Cruz store. They accepted because the location brings them closer to grandparents and siblings. Before going to Seattle, they lived in Marina and San Juan Bautista.

Campbell was in Santa Cruz on Wednesday for an all-day job fair, with a priority to recruit stockers and department managers.

He said he plans to hire 20 employees initially with the head count growing to 30 to 35.

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The new Grocery Outlet, coming to Morrissey Boulevard on the Eastside of Santa Cruz, is still looking for employees.

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The job fair, hosted by Best Western All Suites, attracted a dozen applicants who showed up at the outset.

"Thank you very much," said one job hunter to Campbell, interviewing applicants in a room off the hotel lobby. "I appreciate the opportunity."

As the next candidate sat down, Campbell asked, "Tell me what you know about Grocery Outlet."

One man dressed formally in a black suit sat

next to another dressed casually wearing a backwards baseball cap.

Kaisha Taul, who lives near the store location, said she has a new baby and is looking for a part-time job.

Another applicant, Justin Reznick of Santa Cruz, said second interviews for stockers will be on Saturday. He works as a day laborer and would like to get something more steady.

The target opening date for Grocery Outlet is April 23.

Eastside residents were surprised to hear their post office of 20 years had to find a new home

and that Grocery Outlet would move in, competing against Safeway across the street.

Around the corner, an empty building at 1305 Water St. is springing to life.

Mark Van Meter Construction of Aptos is working on a \$50,000 improvement project to ready the former Staff of Life building for the Thrift Center, which will move from 151 Front St. downtown.

The Thrift Center is one of several in California that accepts donations of reusable items and provides monetary support to United Cerebral Palsy.