



1917 photo of building at Main Street and East Lake Avenue, home of new Goodwill store

Photo courtesy of Watsonville Library

Goodwill opens new store

Watsonville's Goodwill store will hold its grand opening Monday in the old Rasco building at Main Street and East Lake Avenue.

At 11 a.m., Apple Annual Queen Maizie Firouztash will cut the blue ribbon. Attending the ceremony will be City Councilwoman Ann Soldo, store manager Penny Schweitzer and Mark Eason, president of Goodwill Industries of Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties.

Ken Kelly, Goodwill marketing director, said the festivities will include music, balloons and favors.

The new Goodwill store will be the first building in the downtown since the Mansion House to be remodeled under the city's redevelopment program. "There is an interesting building under all that (aluminum) facing: windows, molding and press-metal frieze," said Eason.

The facade will be removed and earlier features of the building will be highlighted, Eason said. The plan for the restored facade was designed by Washington-Jensen and Associates of Capitola, with a color scheme of off-white and a trim of chamois and Navajo red. The 10,000-square-foot interior, with a sales floor of 7,700 square feet, has all new fixtures, paint and panelling. It is twice the size of the old Goodwill store at the 500 block, Eason said.

With the increased size, retail clerks Lynda Gomez and Sharon Morford have been joined by two news salespeople, Helen Morris and Alice McCormick.

Selected for the grand opening is a special stock of clothing and shoes, furniture, appliances, housewares and decorative items, plus some new merchandise donated by shops in the Monterey Bay area, Eason said.

The now-famous "Morgie's" redesigner blue jeans will be available to Goodwill shoppers in Santa Cruz County for the first time. The pre-owned jeans, often from top designers, now carry the Goodwill "Morgie's" label, which originated at Morgan Memorial Goodwill in Boston.

Goodwill has had a store in Watsonville for the past 28 years. In 1956, a 1,300-square-foot Goodwill store opened at 22 East Lake Ave. In 1967, Goodwill moved to 551 Main Street (with 5,000 square feet).

The building, designed by noted California architect William Weeks, was built in 1908 at a cost of \$10,000. The structure was remodeled in 1923 by the owner (then Farm and Forest Realty), and in 1925 a portion of the building became the new home of Western Auto Supply Company, according to Watsonville historian Betty Lewis.

Goodwill bought the building for \$425,000 from John and Robert "Mike" Manfre earlier this year.