

Private company to do catering at senior center

The Association of Watsonville Area Seniors has contracted with a private catering firm, Monterey Bay Catering, to provide noon-time meals at the new Watsonville Senior Center, starting next Monday, it was announced today.

Meanwhile, it was learned, seniors who want to eat lunch at the new center next Monday will have to make reservations no later than Sunday.

Barbara Davis, director of the new center in the old Mormon Church on East Fifth Street, said this morning that starting Monday, the center will serve 125 meals a day on a first-come, first-served basis.

Because the number of meals is limited, she said, persons wishing to eat at the center are being asked to sign up 24 hours in advance and show up no later than 11:30 a.m. on the day they wish to eat there. If more than 125 persons register for lunch on any given day, said Mrs. Davis, those who have not made the cutoff will be put on "standby," and served (in the order in which they signed up) if those with reservations do not arrive by the appointed hour.

Mrs. Davis said this morning that the advance-registration procedure is one that is followed at "many other senior centers."

It is not a practice adhered to at the International Senior Center at 127 E. Beach St., however.

Food and Nutrition Service's noontime seniors meal program will continue to operate there after the new Senior Center opens, and an FNS official said today that seniors who wish to continue eating at the Beach Street center may still sign up for lunch up to about an hour before the meal is served.

Lillian Wilder, director of the Golden Age Nutrition Program — the FNS subsidiary which runs the meals program at the International Center — said today that the cutoff time for meal sign-ups at the Beach Street facility is usually 11 a.m. each day.

She said that while other centers have "experimented" with the 24-hour advance-registration procedure, most "tend to go back to what we've been doing."

"What happens with the advance registration," she explained, "is that the more able people make their reservations, and that tends to leave out those who are not able to come in."

"It leaves out the people who need the meals the most," Mrs. Wilder said. Consequently, she said, "There are not many nutrition sites that are doing that anymore."