

# Valencia Hall in national historical register

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**APTOS** — Valencia Hall, a century-old one-room meeting hall in Aptos, has been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The listing culminates a year-long effort by various county groups to have the county-owned building nationally recognized. The listing also means the hall will receive special protection from destruction by other development.

The hall was built in the 1880s by F.A. Hihn. In those days, Valencia was a township with its own post office and general store, all located in the general vicinity of Cox and Valencia roads.

It's at that intersection that the hall was built on thick redwood stumps. To this day, the foundation stands.

Hihn was a major landowner in the mid-county and operated the Valencia Mill, which was located near the hall.

In its heyday under Hihn's ownership, the hall was a business and meeting place for lumberjacks, when logging was still a big industry in mid-county.

In 1933, Hihn's daughter, Theresa, deeded Valencia Hall to the farm bureau.

Since then, it's been used as a school and church, as well as a meeting place and dance hall.

It was used for services by the Aptos Assembly of God in the 1950s until the church moved to the Aptos Hall in December 1954.

In 1976, the Valencia Farm Center voted to offer the hall to the county. Then-Second District Supervisor Dale Dawson worked with Octagon Museum curator Al Schadel to ensure its continued use as a community center.

Valencia Hall's exterior siding is of an old shiplap pattern. The gable is covered by fish-shaped shingles, with a centerpiece that's a five-point star.

Many groups took part in shepherding the hall through the bureaucratic red tape to get it listed in the national register.

Among them were the Aptos Neighbors Association, the Day Valley 4-H, the county Historical Resources Commission, Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services Department, Planning Department, Octagon Museum and Supervisor Robley Levy.

The state Office of Historic Preservation administers the National Register of Historic places in California.

In a letter just recently sent to county officials, the state said the building had been listed as of Sept. 20.

It's the second structure in the county on the National Register. The other is the

historic Felton Covered Bridge, which is also receiving a facelift.

"Placement on the National Register affords a property the honor of inclusion in the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation and provides a degree of protection from adverse effects resulting from federally funded or licensed projects," the letter said.

Listing provides incentives, such as tax advantages and special building codes.

With \$30,000 in funding from a state bond act, Aptos residents restored the roof and redid the electrical wiring. They also shored up the foundation of the 30- by 40-foot building.