

Local 4th-quarter sales grim

Retail sales in Watsonville were stagnant during the 1990 holiday shopping season, the state Board of Equalization has reported.

When adjusted for inflation, however, the news is more grim — shoppers actually bought 6.5 percent fewer goods and services in Watsonville during the last three months of 1990 than they did during the last three months of 1989.

State analysts say that adjusting for the quarter's 6.5 percent inflation provides a more accurate picture of how much people are actually buying, rather than how much they're spending.

Watsonville's retail sales taken alone were down 4 percent at \$50.4 million, compared to \$52.8 million the year before. When adjusted for inflation, that means shops and stores in Watsonville sold 10.2 percent fewer goods during the quarter.

The category "All other outlets" includes manufacturers, wholesalers, and construction contractors. In Watsonville, this category posted a gain, drawing up the overall taxable sales figure to \$68.5 million — only a slight decline before inflation is factored in.

Santa Cruz didn't fare much better, posting retail sales gains of only 1 percent and overall sales gains of 0.4 percent before adjustment, for a real decrease of nearly 6 percent.

Following a trend, however, Capitola saw sales increases, with both retail and overall sales up 10 percent, for a real increase of about 4 percent. That continues the yearlong dramatic pattern since the expanded Capitola Mall's opening.

Countywide, the total taxable sales for the fourth quarter were \$472 million, an increase of 3 percent over 1989's \$457 million. When adjusted for inflation, however, there was a decrease in real sales of about 3 percent.

Watsonville reflected some state trends that analysts attributed to the recession, and some that city officials attributed to the October 1989 earthquake.

Statewide, stores that sell durable goods — big purchases made to last, such as refrigerators and cars — were hurt the

Watsonville

Figures in thousands of dollars

TYPE OF BUSINESS	4th Qtr. 90	4th Qtr. 89
Clothing stores	2,280	2,846
Gen. merchandise store	2,400	2,542
Drug stores	3,869	3,808
Food stores	4,455	4,885
Packaged liquor store	832	726
Restaurants/bars	6,733	6,231
Furniture/appliance	2,059	1,438
Bldg. materials/farm	7,026	8,593
Auto dealers/supplies	10,407	10,677
Service stations	3,813	2,795
Other retail	6,565	8,224
RETAIL TOTAL	50,439	52,765
All other outlets	18,071	16,115
TOTAL ALL OUTLETS	68,510	68,880

Santa Cruz

Figures in thousands of dollars

TYPE OF BUSINESS	4th Qtr. 90	4th Qtr. 89
Clothing stores	2,355	2,393
Gen. merchandise store	1,553	1,963
Drug stores	3,226	3,207
Food stores	7,836	8,090
Packaged liquor store	2,974	3,025
Restaurants/bars	15,285	15,927
Furniture/appliance	4,523	5,903
Bldg. materials/farm	9,268	8,894
Auto dealers/supplies	23,210	24,339
Service stations	8,840	7,192
Other retail	16,713	13,870
RETAIL TOTAL	95,783	94,803
All other outlets	23,618	24,166
TOTAL ALL OUTLETS	119,401	118,969

Capitola

Figures in thousands of dollars

TYPE OF BUSINESS	4th Qtr. 90	4th Qtr. 89
Clothing stores	9,163	7,838
Gen. merchandise store	27,858	22,672
Drug stores	N/A	N/A
Food stores	3,721	4,062
Packaged liquor store	N/A	N/A
Restaurants/bars	7,400	7,341
Furniture/appliance	3,948	3,725
Bldg. materials/farm	4,231	4,442
Auto dealers/supplies	10,382	8,315
Service stations	2,874	2,011
Other retail	16,241	17,529
RETAIL TOTAL	85,818	77,935
All other outlets	4,058	3,641
TOTAL ALL OUTLETS	89,876	81,576

most, as consumers put off buying. In Watsonville, one sign of this was that sales of cars were down slightly. Sales of building materials/farm implements

were also down, as they have been since hitting a peak soon after the quake, Finance Director Terry Stigall said.

—Susanna Heckman