

Ceremony marks mall comeback

By Aleta Watson
Mercury News Staff Writer

11-24-89
Santa Cruz will celebrate the return of downtown commerce today with the ceremonial opening of the "Phoenix Pavilions," seven huge tents behind the Pacific Garden Mall that house businesses displaced by the Oct. 17 earthquake.

The stores will reopen for the biggest shopping day of the year after a ribbon-cutting ceremony this morning at Lincoln and Cedar streets.

"This Christmas season is going to be very crucial for them to recoup the losses they've had from five weeks of being out of business," said Mimi Paulsen, executive director of the Downtown Business Association. "It's going to be very crucial to the mall."

Once the commercial jewel of the Santa

'Phoenix Pavilions' rise in downtown Santa Cruz

Cruz area, the picturesque mall was ravaged by the Loma Prieta quake, which measured 7.1 on the Richter scale. Many of the mall's old brick and masonry buildings have been razed, leaving gaping holes in the shopping district.

In an attempt to keep the spirit of the mall alive, the Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce and the Cultural Council of Santa Cruz County put together the pavilion project on city-owned parking lots along Cedar Street.

San Jose groups have contributed \$150,000 to help with the project. San Jose Mayor Tom McEnery is scheduled to pre-

sent a check for another \$40,000 to the Downtown Association at today's opening ceremonies.

"Santa Cruz would be in a world of hurt if it weren't for the corporations and organizations of San Jose," said Louie Ritzenhouse, association president. "It's a real strong partnership we've got here. That hill is just not that big."

About 45 merchants, from bookstores to jewelry shops, have moved into the tents and the old Bank of America headquarters building on Pacific Avenue. They will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily through-

out the holidays.

Although nearly 25 percent of downtown's parking spaces have been lost to the earthquake and the tents, officials hope to ease the crunch by encouraging business employees to leave their cars in lots outside the area.

Paulsen is optimistic that the novel approach to Christmas shopping will lure both local residents and tourists back downtown.

"It's going to be festive," she said. "It's going to be something different. It's going to be an attraction for people."

EARTHQUAKE '89 - City of Santa Cruz