Report shows SLO small business losing ground

By Chris Rogers
Staff Writer

Nokies said downtown stores are going to have to make changes in order to improve business. "Most stores close too early," he said. "The store hours need to adapt to the needs of customers who get off work in the late afternoon."

Block said the new Downtown Centre — a new shopping center under construction on Higuera Street — should help to close the gap on Santa Maria. He said he hopes the Centre, scheduled to open at the end of summer, can bring the projected $10 million in sales tax revenue to San Luis Obispo.

Tania Ziegart, who manages the retail clothes store Benetton on Higuera Street, said that, although the Centre will help, store owners in the downtown area have to make some changes of their own.

Since local shopping is limited in selection because of the many specialty stores, Ziegart said, store owners should concentrate more on customer service to keep shoppers from fleeing San Luis Obispo.

"Downtown is lacking in customer service," she said. "Some store owners don’t realize how important it is."

Ziegart said Benetton offers free alterations and maintains a flexible return policy, which she said helps keep her store successful.

Customer service may not be a cure-all for downtown, according to Kim Humphrey, store manager for Riley’s on Higuera Street. Riley’s has closed its Arroyo Grande, Atascadero and Morro Bay stores. San Luis Obispo store is the last on the Central Coast, she said.

"I think that San Luis Obispo business is struggling because of the economy," Humphrey said. "She agreed Santa Maria’s large discount stores are what attract shoppers from this county."

Other store owners are banking on uniqueness, rather than bulk discounts, to attract customers.

Mike di Milo, owner of the Natural Selection on Higuera Street, said that carrying specialty products has kept his store successful.

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Sacramento, Calif.

Prosecutors Monday said state schools chief Bill Honig missused public funds, while defense attorneys told jurors that if they "follow the money," a lesson from Watergate, they will see Honig is innocent.

George Williamson, a chief assistant state attorney general, said Honig "set contracts in which he had a financial interest" in violation of state law. It's "inconceivable" that Honig was unaware he would indirectly benefit, Williamson said. But defense attorney Patrick Hallinan said evidence will "prove something substantially different."

Hallinan urged the jury to heed the lesson, "follow the money," from the Watergate case, which led to former Richard Nixon's resignation.

Honig was indicted in March 1992 by a Sacramento County grand jury, which alleged that he used his position to direct more than $330,000 in publicly funded contracts to benefit the Quality Education Project, a non-profit foundation which was then headed by his wife, Nancy.

Doing so, Hallinan said, shows Honig did not profit from state contracts.

The comments came during opening arguments in the conflict-of-interest trial of the superintendent of public instruction in Sacramento County Superior Court.

Honig was indicted in March 1992 by a Sacramento County grand jury, which alleged that he used his position to direct more than $330,000 in publicly funded contracts to benefit the Quality Education Project, a non-profit foundation which was then headed by his wife, Nancy.

California law prohibits public officials from receiving direct or indirect benefit from any action they take.

Honig, who pleaded innocent to the four-count indictment, would face up to five years in prison if convicted.

The opening arguments appear to be punctuated by Takeoffs between the attorneys as Hallinan tried to show that QEP benefited school children. The subject has been barred by Judge James Long as in-relevant to the case.

Hallinan said testimony about the benefits of QEP, including the amount of money raised by the organization and spent on schools, would show that Honig was not thinking of any benefit to himself.

In the opening arguments, prosecutors said the money from state Education Department contracts went to school districts to pay the salaries of people working for QEP.

Meanwhile, they said, Honig's wife, Nancy, drew a salary of up to $100,000 annually from QEP. The Honigs also drew rent from QEP, which was based in their San Francisco home, according to prosecutors.

News Briefs

U.S. sends home 226 Haitians

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

The U.S. Coast Guard repatriated 226 Haitians on Monday and investigated reports a refugee boat carrying nearly 400 Haitians went down off the Bahamas before Christmas.

A Coast Guard helicopter spotted the 226 Haitians on a "dangerously overloaded sailboat" Saturday six miles west of Great Inagua Island, Bahamas, officials said.

Then the cutter Forward returned them to Port-au-Prince, where each was given $7.50 for food and bus fare home, members of Haiti's private Permanent Refugee Service said.

Cuba told the Coast Guard on Friday it rescued eight Haitians off northeastern Cuba on Dec. 23, and quoted them as saying their 70-foot wooden craft sank in bad weather off Great Inagua Island in the southeastern Bahamas two days earlier. About 396 people were aboard, Cuban officials said.

Shorter tax forms available

Sacramento, Calif.

Officials say that about 2.5 million Californians will be able to file a shorter state income tax return this year, the new Form 540EZ.

The 540EZ eliminates 20 of the 62 lines on the old Form 540, formerly known as the Short Form. By contrast, Form 540, the Long Form, requires a minimum of two more pages containing 50 additional lines, plus copies of your federal return.

Form 540EZ is designed especially for just two groups of taxpayers — renters and single persons with no dependents.

Franchise Tax Board spokesman Jim Reber estimates about 2 million of the 7.5 million Californians who filed Form 540 last year could have filed Form 540A.

He speculates the reason they didn't was fear of losing itemized deductions, which he says is not the case.

German inaction criticized by U.N.

Bonn, Germany

The U.N. chief told Germany Monday that its reluctance to supply troops for global peace missions would hamper U.N. operations.

It was the biggest show yet from an outsider for Germany to stop talking and do something about the shackles placed on the military after World War II.

"Without greater (German) participation, the United Nations will not be able to fulfill the goals of the international community," Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told reporters.

Boutros-Ghali came to Bonn mainly to help German politicians find a way to end a crippling deadlock over supplying troops for future U.N. deployments.

As he discussed the issue with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and other leaders, the opposition Social Democrats rejected an invitation for talks on Wednesday.

They said a meeting was pointless since even Kohl's three-party coalition cannot agree.

Compiled from Associated Press Reports
Proposed waste dump the subject of controversy

By Brad Hamilton
Senior Staff Writer

California desert tortoise and worry it could leak into aquifers and contaminate the Colorado River 20 miles to the east.

Davis, who is chairman of the state Lands Commission and opposes the dump, accused Gov. Pete Wilson of rushing the sale before former Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt takes over as interior secretary under the new presidential administration.

Poly, hospitals generate hazardous waste

By Brad Hamilton
Senior Staff Writer

PG&E's Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant doesn't stand alone in creating low-level radioactive waste — Cal Poly and some local hospitals generate it as well.

Public Safety Director Joe Risser said, on average, Cal Poly disposes one 55-gallon drum full of low-level waste per year. He said the university paid an outsider contractor $3,000 in the fall to transport the drum to a federal depository.

Cal Poly temporarily stores the waste in a wood-frame building in a radiation safety area near the aeronautical hanger on campus.

The waste stored is very low-level, "but you wouldn't want to put it on your skin," Risser said.

Risser said he was unsure of what was in the drum, but thinks it was full of radioactive material used by the physics department, the College of Engineering and the biology department.

Mechanical engineering professor Otto Davidsen said his department no longer instructs courses dealing with nuclear energy and has no dealings with radioactive material.

Chemical department Safety Officer Mike Aller said none of the regular courses in his department teach students using radioactive material. He said chemistry professor John Gore conducted two research projects recently which involved the use of radioactive Carbon-14.

There was unavailable for comment.

Other low-level radioactive waste generated in the San Luis Obispo area comes from French Hospital Medical Center and Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center.

A French Hospital official said a Los Angeles-based company, Siemens, delivers and picks up the radioactive materials used.

A radiological official at Sierra Vista said the hospital stores its low-level waste on site until it dissolves into extremely low-level waste.

Both hospitals inject radioactive isotopes to track the flow of blood in the body, and use radioactive material for other tests.

General Hospital and the Cal Poly Health Center generate no radioactive waste.

The media coverage has uncovered the major producers of low-level radioactive waste.

Pacific Gas & Electric Company's Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant in Avila Beach produced the fourth-largest amount of low-level radioactive waste in California, according to a report by the California Department of Health Services.

During the period from 1988 through September, 1991 the power plant produced 13,963 cubic feet of waste. Southern California Edison in San Clemente produced the most, with 59,618 cubic feet of waste.

Low-level waste ranges from tools and protective clothing used in contaminated areas, to human and animal tissue and internal components of nuclear reactors.

Some radioactive materials are used to distinguish and follow molecules through the chemical processes in the laboratory.

Federal law demands low-level radioactive waste be disposed in authorized sites to avoid exposure to the food chain or the water supply, which could cause cancer.

"Everyone has a right to be concerned, but people have to recognize every form of industry process has a trade off," said Brad Thomas, public information director at Diablo Nuclear Power Plant.

See DIABLO, 3rd page.
Commen ty

Coming out of the closet

"But father it was only drinking at the stream.

"Never mind, dear. Get me a broked sandwich.

By Carolyn Nielsen

This was my first Christmas with my dad since I came out of the closet.

breath, I clenched my fists and gritted my teeth, but it still slipped away, the inevitable smart-ass remark.

"Well, Dad, maybe it's your turn.

This was my first Christmas with my dad since I came out of the closet.

misunderstood and lost in a sea of despair, my gel-suflded uncle from Oklahoma arrived to make me sink from minority status to even lower than that of a sea anemone.


This is the uncle so fond of saying, "Carolyn, go make yourself a useful woman and make me a sandwich."

Aaarrgh!

I tried to stay out of Fred Flinstone's way. I tried to keep conversations with my dad light. I tried not to cringe when my

...
The Central Coast plays host to the migration of monarch butterflies, like these, every winter. Ordinarily, hundreds of thousands of monarchs make San Luis Obispo County their temporary home. One expert, however, says only about one-tenth as many butterflies made the trip this winter.

Photography by Ginny Monteen/CAL POLY TODAY

BY B.J. RAINES
Staff Writer

Every year is the same. They leave their homes to avoid harsh, cold winters that would surely end their lives. They instinctively travel to the coastal areas of California, Florida, Louisiana or eastern Mexico, where the climate is usually mild.

On reaching their destination they assemble in large groups, perhaps because there is safety in numbers. Although southerly migration is instinctive to a host of animal species, among insects the phenomenon is unique to the monarch butterfly.

Monarch butterflies are found throughout the United States, but during winter, monarchs west of the Rockies migrate to the coastline of California.

Monarchs were originally tropical creatures, and as such, they are unable to withstand cold weather. They cannot fly at temperatures much lower than 55 degrees, and when the thermometer dips below 40, monarchs are unable to move.

So they leave their homes to escape the cold.

The normally mild winters along the California coastline from Monterey County to the Baja Peninsula make it a favorite roosting site for monarchs.

After a few months of respite, future generations will make the long trek back once winter has subsided.

Every year is the same.

Except, of course, for this year.

See MONARCHS, page 6
MONARCHS
From page 5

Monarchs are normally a familiar sight to residents of the Central Coast between October and February. In fact, this area is home to the largest wintertime "roosting" site on the West Coast, according to behavioral ecologist Dennis Frey, a Cal Poly biology professor.

Frey and biology professor Kingdon Leeming, an entomologist, have studied monarch populations in a eucalyptus grove just south of the North Beach Campground, in Pismo Beach. More monarchs spend the winter in this grove than in any other place in California.

Frey said he has taken an annual census of monarch populations at this location for the last four years.

He said that, as recently as two years ago, 240,000 monarchs roosted at the North Beach site. This year, Frey estimates less than 20,000 made the trip west.

"Lots of populations go through these cycles," he said. "This is certainly an unusually down year for them."

Frey said the reduced populations of monarchs are not confined to the Pismo site. Several other California roosting sites are reporting, "no butterflies or populations which are very low."

Similar patterns are appearing during the eastern migration as well, he said.

"Why? "That's the $64,000 question," Frey said.

He speculated that unusual weather in the monarchs' home turf has reduced the availability of milkweed, a primary food source for the butterflies, and has consequently reduced their populations.

However, "the more likely scenarios," Frey said, is that some sort of widespread virus or bacteria has had a strong effect (on monarch populations) nationwide.

Lost wintering habitat poses another threat to the migrating monarchs.

The monarchs are very selective about where they overwinter. While they prefer eucalyptus, they will also cluster in Monterey pines or cypress trees.

DIABLO
From page 3

Plant, "Are people willing to give up radioactivity and give up the fight against cancer?"

"Driving a car is a risk, but nobody wants to give up driving."

Some generators are allowed to decay radioactive waste on site to be thrown out with regular trash when the radioactivity falls to an extremely low level.

Some waste can be stored in cardboard boxes wrapped in plastic, but others must be stored in lead-enveloped containers. All waste must be stored and tested in a secure container enclosure built into the concrete enclosure built into the side of a mountain, until enough for a semi-truck load has been accumulated, he said.

"It is dangerous to handle low-level waste in the United States, but the one in Nevada is collecting more waste and the waste at the U.S. site is not as dangerous."

Brown said the NBC has done some studies on low-level waste for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) inspectors in Washington, Arizona, Oregon, and Alaska and elsewhere.

Brown said the NBC hands out some stipends for those who fail inspections. The Washington Public Power Supply System, which was fined $75,000, was the latest to be tagged for a maintenance violation, she said.

Brown said Diablo Canyon produces about 5,000 cubic feet of low-level waste per year. The waste is temporarily stored in a concrete enclosure built into the side of a mountain, until enough for a semi-truck load has been accumulated, he said.

The waste is dumped at Barnwell, S.C. There are two other low-level waste sites in the United States, but the one in Nevada is closing and the site in Washington will be open to only 11 states.

On top of transportation costs, Thomas said PG&E pays $200 per cubic foot for waste disposal. He said dump rates recently tripled.

"I would like to see a low-level waste site in California," Thomas said. "(PG&E) doesn't like to send waste to South Carolina. It's unnecessary to ship waste that far."

Diablo Canyon Power Plant produces 20 percent of PG&E's power and produces enough power for two million customers. PG&E serves 11 million people, Thomas said.

He said the power plant's first reactor began operating May 3, 1983. The second reactor started in 1986.

"Everyone has a right to be concerned, but people have to recognize every form of industrial process has a trade off." Brad Thomas, public information director at Diablo Nuclear Power Plant
Poly uses treys and dunk show to outslug UCSC

Just as fast as the Cal Poly men's basketball team was throwing in three-pointers Monday night, here are some quick shots from the world of Mustang athletics.

A 20-point win over a team called the Banana Slugs was no surprise Monday night.

But what made it even more remarkable was what happened to the once-beaten, now two-loss Banana Slugs.

Stewart and Wilkerson slammed down two dunks apiece. At this pace, Stewart — a freshman — and Wilkerson — a sophomore — should combine for 44.4 more dunks in Matt Gym by the time the graduates leave.

Senior Silver — the nation's best junior college three-point shooter last year — made his first three-attempts in the first half to lead the Mustangs' 13 trey performance.

Ironically, the only Mustang not to attempt a three this year is Stewart.

Since we were able to crunch Division III Santa Cruz and we've gone 3-4 against Div. II opponents this year, you may think we should reconsider moving up to Div. I and go down to Div. III.

Keeping on the subject of second-guessing, maybe Cal Poly Athletic Director John McCutcheon is kicking himself for keeping Lyle Setencich as head football coach, now that Mike Ditka is available.

Last season's football woes were not in the second, and the same holds true for the offense this season. Former-year starter, Steve Lombardi, might miss next season because of herniated disks in his back.

Suggestion: If Shawn Kirkelloch starts at center because of health problems, his 6-9, 285-pound frame would really fill the Mustang's center void.

Prediction: Cal Poly President Warner Baker picks the 49ers to win the Super Bowl — I'll put a $100 down at Harrah's this weekend for you, Mr. Pres.

By Brad Hamilton
Senior Staff Writer

The game clock clicked down to its final five seconds as Brian Stewart's reverse slam punctuated the 87-67 victory over UC Santa Cruz Monday night.

The NCAA Division II Cal Poly men's basketball team, 6-8 overall and 0-2 in conference, halted its three-game losing skid with a home-court victory over the Division III Banana Slugs in front of 3300 lookers.

The 20-point win marked a huge turnaround for the Mustangs, who had lost their previous three games by a total of 85 points.

Head coach Steve Beason said he thought the great defensive intensity sparked from a change in the pregame practice. He said the team usually shoots around in the practice, but Beason stressed defensive drills Monday.

"Beason even put on some (playing) clothes and played with us, which pumped up a lot of the guys," Oliver said.

Despite playing in pain, Oliver and three other Mustang guards scored double-digits. Oliver put up 10 along with Greg Paulson's 11, Matt Clawson's 17 and Sheridan Silver's game-high 18.

In the 18 minutes Clawson played before he fouled out, he sank 7-11 from the floor to grab 15 rebounds.

The Banana Slugs kept within seven points until the final minute when Cal Poly's 71 percent (15 of 21) in the second half sank the Banana Slugs' 6-foot-5-inch Darren Shearer, who played with Oliver in high school, led the team with 7 rebounds.

The Mustangs' forward/center Bubba Burrage, who missed pregame practice because of bronchitis, led the team with seven rebounds.

Cal Poly made 65 percent of its field goals (33 of 51), shooting 71 percent (15 of 21) in the second half. The Mustangs sunk 13 of 19 treys (68 percent), including 5 of 7 in the second half.

The Mustangs continue their homestand Friday at 8:05 p.m. against Chapman (3-1 in conference), 4-10 overall. Cal State Dominguez Hills (1-1, 9-3) comes to Mott Gym Saturday at 8:05 p.m.

Poly rattles rim, shakes off Santa Cruz

Cal Poly freshman Brian Stewart dunks with two fingers left in the Mustangs' 87-67 win over UC Santa Cruz in Mott Gym on Monday night.

The Banana Slugs kept within three points until 9:01 into the first half. Cal Poly then went on a 10-4 run lasting almost four minutes to put the score at 32-20.

At the half, Cal Poly led 46-37.

The Banana Slugs shot 41.2 percent from the field (21 of 51), but held close as they grabbed 31 rebounds.

The Banana Slugs' 6-foot-5-inch Darren Shearer, who played with Oliver in high school, led the team with 7 rebounds.

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