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Flooding takes toll on Tillamook businesses

BY SHASTA KEARNS MOORE
Headlight-Herald Staff

TILLAMOOK — The doors are locked at the Dairy Queen on North Main Avenue and they may never reopen to the public.

The windows, which earlier showed a nearly 5-foot waterline, have been washed since the flood in early November, but a few splatters of mud still show on the bright red booths and tan floors of the restaurant.

Nearly everything will have to be replaced for the Dairy Queen to reopen, said owner Jeff Johnston, and depending on returns from insurance and Federal Emergency Management Administration claims, it just might not be financially feasible.

"I don't want to give it up because I loved what I did," Johnston said, adding that many people have told him they would be very sad to see the 46-year-old business go.

If Johnston did reopen, it would likely be in another location, leaving his 23 employees out of a job for several months. In the event he is able to stay at the Main Avenue location, Johnston said the earliest he could open would be February. But staying, he said, "is not

looking real likely."

A few blocks away, Jon Cummings, owner of the hard-hit Northport Plaza, has worked since the day the waters receded to tear up and replace just about everything affected, from flooring to sheet rock to electrical wiring.

"We're still working the bugs out of our connections," said Georgine Beveridge over the roar of a fan still trying to desiccate the floor three weeks after the flood. Beveridge is manager of The Mail Box, one of only four businesses still operating out of the 12-unit complex.

All of the units will be closed at some point for repairs, which Cummings said could reach a total of \$400,000. Some of the first businesses to be renovated, including the Fern Restaurant and Movietime Video, hope to be open before Christmas.

As for the McClaskey brothers, Mark and Tony said they haven't replaced very much in their Mar Clair Inn for fear that another flood will come before the end of the rainy season. For now, they are drying, sanitizing and cleaning everything they can.

Floodwaters damaged 15 out of the 47 rooms in the motel as



SHASTA KEARNS MOORE/HEADLIGHT-HERALD PHOTOS

Video racks are stacked up on the porch outside of Movietime Video in the Northport Plaza. The video rental store will be closed for at least three more weeks to rebuild after floodwaters destroyed up to 3 feet of dry-wall and an estimated \$60,000 in DVDs and VHS tapes.

well as much of the equipment in the laundry room and three storage rooms, bringing the total damage to between \$250,000 and \$300,000, said Mark McClaskey.

"It's pretty devastating," he said.

The Blue Heron French Cheese Company, although still the scene of more renovation and reconstruction, plans to reopen its blue and white barn the week of Dec. 11.

Owner Denny Pastega said that including damage to out-



The Blue Heron Cheese Factory closed for a month for repairs after the November flood rose nearly a foot inside, leaving a layer of water and mud. Owner Denny Pastega estimates the flood cost as much as \$350,000, including lost merchandise and damage to the surrounding buildings.

buildings and merchandise, the damage could range from \$250,000 to \$350,000.

In addition to the necessary repairs, Pastega and his crew have also reinforced the building with concrete and brick around the bottom of the outer

walls to ward off future floods.

"We want to protect our investment," Pastega said, surrounded by construction equipment and debris. "We don't want to go through this every year."