



KEY MAKER TO LOCK UP SHOP

Business has failed to pan out for a Ventura key maker who relocated about a year ago, and she will shut her doors this month.

BUSINESS, 10A



Key maker's hard-lock story began with move; she'll close

Just over a year has passed since Sheryl Kitchen moved her keymaking business from a kiosk in the middle of the parking lot behind the Ventura Smart & Final to a location on Main Street.

But in the new location the business hasn't prospered, and Kitchen will close Sheryl's Keys for good at the end of March.

'This location is out of sight and out of mind. It's been a year and a month, and I'm going to have to file for bankruptcy. I haven't been able to make rent, electricity and the phone bill," she said. "I've had to stop taking credit cards. I just can't make it on \$6 a day."

Kitchen said she will miss owning her owning a business but that she is positive about her future.

"There is a new journey ahead - a new adventure. I'll keep my head high, a spring in my step and a smile on my face, she said.

The move to the office near Borchard Avenue came a year ago. Right before Christmas 2011, Kitchen called the prop-erty management of the

and sold keys for more than 20 years, saying the roof was leaking and that her one-person shop had been broken into for the ninth time. She was told she had to vacate the kiosk, with its counters that opened to customers, because the parking lot was being remodeled.

A popular fixture in town, Kitchen was chosen to be in the Johanna Spinks 'Faces of Ventura" project, something she considers a great honor.

"A lot of people have commented on how nice

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that picture is. The exhibit will be going down to the (Museum of Ventura County). I'm so honored to be part of Ventura's history," she said.

Kitchen's story also was documented by Jeff Palmer, who made a film about the kiosk for CAPS-TV after observing the warm relationships the key maker had with her clients.

As she approaches age

58 this month, Kitchen said she is wiped out financially and isn't sure where she is going to live. She said she has been offered a key-making job at Plaza Locksmith, where she will have to learn how to use state-of-the art equipment.

She said she isn't a locksmith, just a key maker who learned her craft when the kiosk she ran was owned by Cole National Corp., which operated the ki-osks at Sears stores across the United States. When the corporation got out of

the key-making business, Kitchen bought the kiosk and ran it on her own.

Despite the turn of events, she said, the sup-port of Worship Center in Ventura and her deep faith keep her going.

"This is all part of God's plan for me," Kitchen said. Sheryl's Keys will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays at 2674 E. Main St., Suite C, through the end of March.

The phone number is 643-5397.

Sheryl's story continues...

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SherylsKeyosk.info