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## Law ensures services for two prisons

### City's agreements with facilities consolidated

By Mike Adamick/Staff Writer

A bill written by Assemblywoman Helen Thomson, D-Solano, that consolidates various agreements for services at two Vacaville prisons into a 40-year master plan recently was signed by Gov. Gray Davis.

The new law ensures that the prisons continue to receive services like water and wastewater treatment while allowing the city to continue using and expanding Keating Park and other land owned by the state, according to Thomson's office.

Previously, the city and the state Department of Corrections negotiated for varying services separately, creating different agreement expiration dates.

The new law groups utilities, land use, water and wastewater services into one contract, which would be renegotiated every 40 years.

"I introduced (Assembly Bill) 1622 to encourage greater governmental efficiency through reduced negotiating, thus freeing up both state and local government resources," Thomson said.

The new law also will help in future negotiations for increased wastewater services, said David Tompkins, assistant director of the Department of Public Works.

With increased populations, the prisons could need more wastewater services, said Tompkins.

Since the 1960s, the city had an agreement with the state Department of Corrections to provide 1 million gallons of water each day for the two prisons - California Medical Facility and California State Prison, Solano.

That agreement expires this year.

The new law - which already has taken effect - will ensure water for the prisons for the next

40 years.

Gregg Werner, deputy city manager, said the new law establishes a 40-year lease commitment for Keating Park and the land on which the office of Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals now sits.

"A master agreement will enable the California Department of Corrections and the city of Vacaville to continue working together in a model of harmonious prison-community relations that serves both the state's and the community's needs," Thomson said.

## Survey reveals mold ailments

By Julie Davidow/Staff Writer

Preliminary results of a medical survey released Tuesday added a new wrinkle to the long and often painful process of removing toxic mold from Crescent Elementary School.

Of 109 teachers, instructional assistants and parent volunteers polled in June, between 21 and 36 people reported symptoms related to mold-related illness, according to a survey conducted by occupational and environmental specialist Dr. James Craner.

Craner presented his findings at a meeting of the Crescent Community Committee - a group composed of parents and teachers from the school.

Because the study was executed anonymously, there's no way to discern whether the ailing respondents work in the same buildings or are scattered throughout the Suisun City campus.

"If we know where the ill people are, we can pinpoint where to sample," said Craner, who suggested unmasking the participants to determine if a trend exists.

Portable classrooms were installed on the Suisun City campus to replace two buildings sealed off late last fall after dangerous levels of indoor mold were detected.

Repeated tests of the portables revealed no evidence that toxic mold from the contaminated buildings has infiltrated the rooms teachers and children have occupied for months.

"My question is why do we need to do this," said Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District Superintendent Sharon Tucker, who asked how much the further analysis would cost. "It will be as if the district is not being faithful in maintaining anonymity."

Mary Kaduk, a teacher at Crescent, urged at least offering other faculty the option of revealing their identities to prompt a closer look at possible problem areas.

"Beyond the money, beyond the scientific end of it, we've got human beings we're dealing with who have been very, very sick and are still suffering," said Kaduk, who agreed to take the confidentiality issue directly to the teachers for a decision.

Meanwhile, industrial hygienists will continue air sampling in the Hall Building, where recent tests pinpointed persistent mold spores.

Construction at the Hall and Scally buildings - where walls and floors were dismantled to remove mold - is set to begin in November and wrap up in March 2000, said Kevin LaChappelle, the district's maintenance director.

## Just having fun

### Dixon teen balances multi-sports schedule

By Ken Hart/Sports Writer

Excuse Sean O'Brien if he drops basketball from his athletic schedule this year.

The Dixon High School sophomore may be too drained to dunk by basketball season.

O'Brien's plate was full during his freshman year at Dixon. He played junior varsity football for the high school while playing fall baseball for the NorCal Angels 18-under team.

After playing junior varsity basketball in the winter, O'Brien became a standout pitcher on Dixon's varsity baseball team. He also found time to take part in the Superior California Athletic League swimming finals, and won a SCAL title as part of a Rams' relay team.

He was named the school's top male freshman athlete.

"It was pretty draining with homework and school and adapting to high school, (but) I felt I had a good year," O'Brien said.

O'Brien's feelings apparently outweighed his fatigue, because he has come back for more. O'Brien will play on the Rams' varsity football team during the week and return to the Angels on the weekends.

He also will pitch in a Labor Day tournament in Nevada for the Natomas Indians baseball team.

Yes, football should be nice. O'Brien is just 15 years old but stands 6-foot-4 and weighs 210 pounds. He plans on lining up as a tight end and defensive end for Ram head coach Tom Crumacker.

But baseball is his priority. His size and left-handed pitching prowess has given O'Brien the potential for a successful baseball career at Dixon.

"I don't know if I'll play football my junior year," he said. "Right now I'm not worried about it. I'm just having fun."

O'Brien's fun has come at the expense of opponents in nearly every level of baseball. He recently pitched successfully at the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) National Championships in Millington, Tenn.

With 60 teams, 1,200 players and plenty of scouts on hand, the tournament gave O'Brien

some much-needed exposure. He reached the finals of the event with the Capitol City Bombers, posting a 2-0 record with a 2.40 ERA and one save.

"It was the funnest thing I've ever done, sport-wise, by far," O'Brien said.

The fun ended, however, when the Bombers suffered a 2-1 defeat to the East Cobb Astros of Georgia. O'Brien said he took the loss hard.

"It was tough, especially since it was 2-1," he said. "It's something that I still dwell on now. It's tough to let go."

His ability to consistently throw hard, and to throw breaking balls and change-ups for strikes, impressed Bomber manager Chris Fahey and the rest of the team.

"He was in the top two or three pitchers for his age over there," Fahey said. "The kids loved him off the field. He blended in there with the rest of them. He's the one guy on the team (that) if we gave him the ball, we're going to win."

Angels manager Rob Bruno recommended O'Brien to the Bombers, and sees a lot of potential in him.

"The fact that he's hard-working, tall and a left-hander puts him ahead of 99 percent of the people," Bruno said.

O'Brien went 4-3 with a 2.98 ERA in his freshman year on Dixon's baseball team. He also had 59 strikeouts in 54 innings.

Bruno said the AAU tournament experience will help O'Brien's career with the Rams.

"He won't be in any bigger pressure situation than he was at the nationals," he said. "That will improve his maturity level. Basically, it'll speed up his pitching progress."

Plenty of talented baseball players have played on squads managed by Bruno. He said O'Brien compared favorably to Tim Cunningham, Ben Clayton and Brent Hoard - left-handed pitchers who all went on to Division I universities.

"Sean is every bit as good as those guys. He's a power pitcher who can be a finesse pitcher as well," Bruno said.

O'Brien savors such praise, but knows college is a long way down the road. He is, after all, just a sophomore in high school.

"I don't want to get too out of focus, but it definitely is on my mind," O'Brien said. "I'm going to have to work hard at it and do a lot of things."