



The Web Site of **The Sacramento Bee**

This story is taken from [Sacbee](#) / [Politics](#).

## Woodland in line for 're-entry' prison

### Resulting influx of state funds would help Yolo with its jail expansion.

**By Andy Furillo - [afurillo@sacbee.com](mailto:afurillo@sacbee.com)**

***Published 12:00 am PDT Saturday, March 15, 2008***

Yolo County has positioned itself to receive potentially millions in state money for jail expansion by agreeing to locate a new "re-entry" prison for inmates ticketed for home.

Undersheriff Tom Lopez confirmed Friday that Yolo County has agreed to host a 150-bed re-entry facility for prisoners in the final months of their sentences at its jail campus on Gibson Road in Woodland.

The agreement gives Yolo County a big boost in its application for jail expansion money under last year's Assembly Bill 900, the state's plan to add 46,000 beds to California's prisons and jails. The bill initially had sought a 53,000-bed expansion.

"We're in very good position," Lopez said. "At least we feel we're in good position for funding because we're ready to go right now for a jail expansion project."

Lopez said, "We're prepared to start breaking ground almost immediately" on both the re-entry prison and a 148-bed expansion on the jail.

Yolo was one of 17 counties that have agreed to host the mini-prisons, according to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The corrections agency determined that such an agreement would give the counties added preference in their applications for funding under the \$1.22 billion AB 900 set aside for jails.

Re-entry prisons will be infused with vocational, educational, drug and other programs to help the state reduce its three-year recidivism rate of nearly 70 percent, the nation's worst.

El Dorado County also was on the jail preference list put out by corrections officials, but sheriff's spokesman Sgt. Bryan Golmitz said the agency hasn't located a re-entry site.

Both the jails and the re-entry facilities were keystones to the \$7.9 billion AB 900 plan approved by the Legislature and signed last May by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Under the re-entry plan, inmates in the final few months of their term – no matter their offense – would be shuttled to mini-prisons in or near their hometowns. AB 900 calls for shifting a total of 16,000 prisoners to the re-entry facilities, most of which will house 500

offenders.

Corrections officials on Friday obtained "initial interim financing" approval for \$2.5 billion to start the first phase of the AB 900 prison construction plan. The approval came on three unanimous votes by the five-member State Public Works Board.

The prison agency still hasn't presented any specific construction plans to the board. It had initially pledged to provide the information last July.

Deborah Hysen, the prison agency's construction chief, predicted the department will break ground on two prison projects this summer and four more before the end of the year.

One of the projects is the conversion of an empty women's prison in Stockton to a re-entry facility. The other would turn a youth prison in Paso Robles into a 1,000-bed facility for lower-security inmates over 50 years old.

Hysen reaffirmed to the board the state's commitment to tie most of the the new beds to improved rehabilitation programs.

"We believe that this is a critical component of providing a comprehensive prison system," Hysen said. The state needs to "give these inmates a chance to be successful on the outside."

Opponents of AB 900 questioned the bill's promise of rehabilitation and asked the board to hold off on the interim financing.

"AB 900 is a prison expansion proposal, a prison construction proposal, and it's continuing down the same failed path of attempting to build our way out of the (overcrowding) problem," said Rose Braz of Californians United for a Responsible Budget.

As of March 5, the state was responsible for 170,118 inmates, most of them housed in 33 prisons crowded to 199 percent of their designed capacity.

In Yolo County, Undersheriff Lopez said his agency is expecting "mixed reviews" from residents of surrounding Woodland and elsewhere about putting more inmates in their midst. He said he thinks "they'll understand" when they learn how re-entry might correct the returning offenders' bad habits.

"We feel it's better to give the inmate some tools, on helping them readapt to coming back into our communities, instead of just giving them a bus ticket and a couple hundred dollars and sending them on their way," Lopez said.

Sacramento County, which once had expressed interest in a re-entry prison, is no longer keen on the idea, Sheriff John McGinness said Friday.

McGinness said he was concerned the budget-conscious county would have to pay to staff the facility over the long term.

"I'm not that optimistic," McGinness said about Sacramento housing a re-entry prison.

Go to: [Sacbee](#) / [Back to story](#)