Oakland to Lansing: You pick prison site

By Tim Richard stalf writer

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Declining to gang up on each other, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners sent the question of selecting a state prison site back to the Michigan Department of Corrections.

"Let's ship alt this back to the state," said board Chairman Richard Wilcox, Ro-Ortonville. "We'd have to battle our constituents" by recommending a prison site, the white-haired veteran of county politics said.

"We could get 14 votes for a lot of sites. As long as it's not in my back yard, I can vote to put it in any of your back yards," Wilcox said candidly.

BIPARTISAN, 18-9 majority A BIPARTISAN, 10-9 majority agreed with the chairman Thursday. After weeks of work in two commit-tees, the board voted to ship its studies to Lansing, where the Corrections De-partment and the state Legislature will

make the final decision.

County forces were spilt into two large camps and several smaller ones.

County Executive Danlet T. Murphy, a Republican, favored using 10 acres of the state's Clinton Valley Center (CVC) property in Ponilae for a \$50-bed prison. The CVC site was admandly opposed by about 10 employees and relatives of mental patients who asked to speak to the Board of Commissioners.

The Republican-dominated board's public services committee preferred the site of the county's trusty camp in Auburn Hills.

Other sites under serious study were adjacent to the county fail on North Telegraph Road in Ponilae and the Rold Mountain State Recreation Area.

"About 20" sites were mentioned, one commissioner estimated.

THE MINORITY gave Wilcox some flak, calling his recommendation "a cop-out."

"This is a change from the usual procedure," said Commissioner Beity Fortino, D-Pontino. "The state has asked us for one site. They don't want two tons of material."

Area commissioners supporting Wilcox were Republicans G. William Caddell of Walled Lake (district includes part of West Bloomfield, Marilyan Gosiling of Bloomfield Hills, Thomas Law of West Bloomfield, John McDonald of Farmington, David Moffitt of Bloomfield Township, Ralph Nelson of Rochester, John Oisen of Huntington Woods (district includes Laturuy Village), Robert Page of Birmington (district includes part of Troy) and Walley (and the Republicants WA. Hasberger of Birmingham, Susan Kuhn of Clawson (district includes part of Troy) and Nancy McConnell of Bloomfield Hills, along with Democrats James Doyon of Madison Heights (district includes part of Troy), Alexan

der Perinoff and Larry Pernick, both of Southfield.

WILCOX APPOINTED a prison site special committee several weeks ago which "held quite a few meetings and recommended four sites. They were not

recommended four sites. They were not unanimous," he said.

The question then was referred to the public services committee, which "whittled the sites from four to one," But that committee dropped the ball into Wilcox's lap for a final recommendation.

dation.

So Wilcox turned the chairman's gavel over to the vice chair, took the floor and made the motion himself to "ship all this back to the state."

USING THE public's portion of the meeting — required under the Open Meetings Act — about 10 persons op-posed the Clinton Valley Center site.

Meetings Act — awwa say prosed the Clinton Valley Center site. One favored it.

"CVC is a hospital. It is not a prison," said Dorothy McQueen of Farmington Hills, representing the Allance for the Mentally Ill in Michigan.

Norman Abel, Bloomifield Township resident and member of the same group, brought a hush to the commissioners' auditorium as he told of a son's lone hattle with mental Illness. "I aloners' auditorium as he told of a son's long battle with mental illiness. "I would hate to have a prison on the grounds (where) my son could be influ-enced. Please — there's no reason to put a prison on this site. "O'r else offer an alternative — put the hospital on a different site."

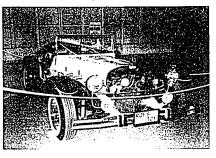
THOMAS WHITE, representing

AFSCME union employees of the CVU, sald, "Mental patients about be treated in a scene setting, which are the would destroy our ability to do that." White noted the uprisings and battles at Southern Michigan Prison at Jackson in the last two weeks as examples of why a prison shouldn't be close to a hospital for the mentally ill.

Richard Chalfonte, president of AFSCME Local 49, said, "Putting a prison that site will not help the

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for the five-week course. Informa-tion about the course is available from Charles Nelson at 368-3174. The Highland Lakes Campus is at 7359 Cooley Lake Road, Union Lake. Summer session registration will be Joly 1 with late registration July 2, 3 and 5.

todon bones.

Mastodons, which look like furry elephants, inhabited this region as glaciers receded some 10,000 years

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