

# Towns line up for proposed new prison

8/12/93 Jsl/pt  
State's worst criminals  
would be at Super Max

By Ed Bierschenk  
COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

CHICAGO — More than two dozen Illinois communities have lined up for the honor of hosting some of the state's worst criminals.

From Grundy to Union counties, leaders are vying for the opportunity to be the site for the 500-bed maximum security prison known as Super Max. The prison, designed to house inmates deemed troublemakers at their current institutions, is part of a series of prison reforms that Gov. Jim Edgar announced at a press conference in Chicago Wednesday.

The reforms were proposed by an Edgar-ap-

pointed task force on crime and corrections.

In addition to announcing a timetable for the prison, expected to be in operation in 1996, Edgar also signed a Senate Bill 956. The bill allows judges to send more inmates to boot camps, permits the Department of Corrections to place more inmates on electronic detention as they conclude their sentence and allows prisoners who participate in educational, drug treatment or certain job programs to earn time off their sentence.

Edgar said the legislation will keep people off the street who are dangerous and prepare other inmates for returning to society.

Edgar said the legislation will deal with overcrowding while saving taxpayers millions of dollars. It costs the state \$16,000 annually to house one inmate in traditional prison compared to \$2,640 for electronic detention. Edgar said \$100 million will be saved over the next four years.

In addition, the governor said three new 224-

cell housing units will be added to medium security prisons at Mt. Sterling, Canton and Sheridan.

The cells will house 1,344 inmates and are expected to cost \$6 million each to construct. Each will create 50 construction jobs and add 18 prison staffers, Edgar said.

Construction of the \$60 million Super Max is expected to begin in 1994. Interested communities have until Sept. 13 to apply to the state. Regional meetings will be scheduled in early October for local presentations and public hearings will be slated for finalist communities. A recommendation is to be made to Edgar by October.

The prison will house inmates who attack prison staff and other inmates as well as those who cause such attacks, said state officials. Inmates assigned to Super Max will have limited time out of cells and few privileges. They will be able to work their way out of the prison over a period of time based on conduct and rules compliance.

## Plans would reduce prison population

SOUTH TOWN

By Jack Beary  
and Rick Bryant 8-12-93  
Staff Writers

Gov. Jim Edgar signed into law Wednesday a measure that will provide the state with a new 500-bed "super-maximum" prison while allowing more inmates to be released early or sent to boot camps.

### POLITICAL NOTEBOOK

Under the new law, the state will reduce the projected prison population growth rate by 6,500 inmates over the next four years, Edgar said.

Some inmates will be eligible for release up to a year early on electronic monitoring, while others can earn good time and qualify for monitored release 90 days ahead of schedule by completing drug counseling or education programs in prison, Edgar said.

The state has not yet selected a site for the new prison.

**NRA TAKES AIM:** The latest target of the National Rifle Association is U.S. Rep. Mel Reynolds (D-2nd) of Chicago.

In mailings to South Side and south suburban voters, the NRA criticizes Reynolds' bill to increase

taxes on handguns and ammunition and describes him as "largely misinformed."

But Reynolds said Wednesday he was ready to take on the powerful gun lobby. He claims that escalating violence in the country has turned citizens against guns and predicts major gun control reforms will be enacted this year.

Under Reynolds' proposal, the increased revenues from the gun taxes would help cover medical bills for gunshot victims.

U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-4th) of Chicago, another freshman congressman and outspoken gun-control advocate, so far has escaped the NRA crosshairs, aide Billy Weinberg said Wednesday.

**TOWN MEETINGS:** U.S. Rep. George Sangmeister (D-11th) of Mokena will conduct two town hall meetings Friday.

The first is from 10 a.m. to noon in the Sauk Village Village Hall. The second is from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Hegewisch Chamber of Commerce, 13301 S. Brandon Ave., Chicago.

Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun (D-III) will hold a series of 15 town hall meetings next week. They include one at 10 a.m. Aug. 21 at the Cement Masons Union Hall, 100 Republic St., Joliet.

# No shortage of sites for 'super max' prison

Jobs-starved towns lining up even before project approved

By Matt Krasnowski  
COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

SPRINGFIELD — Communities from across the state are lining up to serve as host to prison inmates who are called the "worst of the worst."

Gov. Jim Edgar on Monday officially announced his full support of the \$60 million, 500-inmate "super maximum security" penitentiary, saying it will help improve safety for prison officers. Both chambers of the Legislature have endorsed the proposal, but no legislation authorizing the facility's construction has been passed.

The facility is intended to serve as a detention center for inmates who attack prison staff members and influence violence within the prisons.

Illinois Department of Corrections Director Howard A. Peters said his department has received inquiries from several communities across the state interested in the prison and the 300

Illinois and Knox and Fulton counties in west central Illinois, a spokesman said.

Peters said community support as well as transportation concerns will be taken into account in considering the facility.

Edgar said the siting process will be begun until the package passes the Legislature.

While the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Corrections and Edgar's own task force on prison issues recommended construction of the facility, the governor was reluctant to agree to the plan because of the \$60 million price tag.

After a recent meeting with prison officers Edgar said he was convinced of the need for the super max not only to house dangerous inmates but also to allow the rest of the system to function normally.

He said the Legislature must consider other prison reforms he is recommending along with the super-max proposal.

House Speaker Michael J. Madigan has held up those proposals, which include expanding the number of inmates eligible for home detention.

jobs it could bring. It could be completed by December 1995.

Peters has had inquiries from the Benton-Area Chamber of Commerce and officials in Jackson, Saine, Union and Crawford counties in southern

# Decatur must pursue 'super-max'

GIVEN THIS region's need for jobs and other forms of economic development, there's a need to go after whatever is available. So let's go after a prison being talked about by the state of Illinois. Or an air reserve unit being relocated from O'Hare Airport.

Decatur now seems bent on pursuing these opportunities vigorously. Some wondered early on whether having a prison might discourage other forms of industrial development. Face facts — 300 jobs are 300 jobs we don't have right now. Building the prison will create jobs for the trades.

Decatur had a bad experience a few years ago when a relatively few people eventually killed Decatur's bid for the prison that eventually went to Taylorville. Ridiculous rumors and claims were offered as gospel truth. Falsehoods were spread about the ease with which AIDS would spread into the community. Fears were stirred about danger from escapes or the discharge of weapons.

Let's learn from that experience. Be prepared to counter baseless rumors. Taylorville's experience has generally been positive. So has Hillsboro's. Escapes will occur from time to time, but aren't an everyday happening.

Other communities will be bidding for the prison — same for the reserve unit. Mayor Richard M. Daley decided space used by the air unit at O'Hare can be used more profitably by other types of ventures. Fine. Let's see if we can't find a spot here.

When such opportunities become available, there should be no real question about whether Decatur will go after them. In her first campaign for the Illinois Senate, Penny L. Severns said the main issues were three-fold — jobs, jobs, jobs.

That hasn't changed.

# Canton will try to lure 'super-max' prison

Mayor says city needs to be 'on ground floor' if facility gets legislative go-ahead

By OWEN WILLIAMS

CANTON — The City Council decided Tuesday it will attempt to lure a proposed super-maximum-security prison for "human predators" to the Canton area.

The council's unanimous decision comes before the Illinois General Assembly has approved legislation for the prison's construction. Gov. Jim Edgar recently voiced his support for the project.

"I don't think any decisions have been made (by the state) ... but past practice has told us that, if you don't get in on the ground floor, you won't even be considered," said Mayor Donald Edwards, referring to Canton's past attempts to locate prisons in the community.

A super-maximum-security prison is part of a comprehensive package of recommendations made by a state task force on crime, said Nic Howell, a spokesman for the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC).

"It would be for predators, violent criminals who disrupt the operations of maximum-security prisons," said Howell.

A special prison for problem inmates could alleviate the difficulties standard maximum-security prisons face, such as locking down a whole cell block to contain individual prisoners. A super-maximum-security prison, which would house 500 prisoners, would have a 23-hour daily

lock-down, with each inmate kept under strict control.

The price tag for such a facility — an estimated \$60 million for construction with an annual estimated budget of \$15 million — has made the project attractive to several Illinois communities, Howell said.

The IDOC has received written requests for information on the project from Jackson County and from the city of Benton, Canton, Galesburg and Crawford County have made oral inquiries.

The 300 jobs the proposed prison might bring could help lower Canton's 9.8 percent unemployment rate, said Chris Spears, Canton's community development director. He said the positive experience with the Illinois River Correctional Center (IRCC), located in Canton, made the new proposal more appealing to the council.

"We can all judge the future somewhat by the past. After the announcement (that IRCC was coming), it seemed to be a catalyst ... and we've seen economic growth ever since," Edwards said.

The IRCC may make Fulton County more desirable for the new project. Several sites originally targeted for IRCC could be reconsidered, possibly one close to IRCC, Spears said.

Separate from the super-maximum proposal, some of the unused land surrounding IRCC may be used to expand the existing prison to accommodate its rapidly growing population. The proposed expansion is part of a legislative package awaiting approval by the General Assembly, Edwards said.

# Illinois counties vying for 'super max' prison

W. AUKETTAN 6-8-93

By Matt Krasnowski  
Copley News Service

Springfield — Communities from across the state are lining up to serve as host to prison inmates who are called the "worst of the worst."

Gov. Jim Edgar on Monday announced his full support of the \$60 million, 500-inmate "super maximum security" penitentiary, saying it will help improve safety for prison officers. Both chambers of the Legislature have endorsed the proposal but no legislation authorizing the facility's construction has been sent to Edgar's desk.

The facility is intended to serve as a detention center for inmates who attack prison staff members and foster violence within the prisons.

Illinois Department of Corrections Director Howard Peters said his department has received inquiries from several communities across the state interested in the prison and the 300 jobs it could bring. It could be completed by December 1995.

The Benton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Jackson County Board, both southern Illinois communities, have mailed inquiries about the facility to Peters, said Corrections spokesman Nic Howell.

PRISON SUPPORT: Gov. Jim Edgar is expected Monday to announce his full support for construction of a "supermaximum security" prison to house the state's most troublesome inmates. The governor has previously supported the \$60 million, 500-inmate facility in concept but asked supermax supporters to find less costly alternatives — such as building the unit at an existing prison. 6-5-93, JAMES F.

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# Don't delay choice for super-max site

The super maximum-security prison included in the budget compromise could set off another round of "prison sweepstakes" competition among communities hoping to be the site.

As former Gov. James R. Thompson greatly expanded the number of state prisons in the 1960s, communities launched elaborate campaigns to land a prison with its sought-after jobs. One community even produced a music video!

Let's not go through such a circus again. Gov. Jim Edgar would like a decision by the end of the year. That seems to be a workable timetable.

The state should have many of the facts, figures and supporting arguments from previous searches for prison sites. Officials know which communities came close to being selected.

It should not take long for communities to update that information and for officials to review the facts.

The longer the decision is delayed, the closer it will be to next fall's gubernatorial election. That is likely to further politicize the selection process.

There should be no need for brass bands and lobbying. Just look at what is best for the state and the community involved, then make the best choice.

# Many towns vying for super-max prison despite safety concerns

By the Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD — Communities wracked by plant closings and layoffs are lining up to snare the state's new \$60 million super-maximum prison and the hundreds of jobs that will come with it.

Officials in at least 26 Illinois counties and towns say they are interested in getting the 500-bed prison, although some residents in those communities are worried having the state's most violent and disruptive criminals nearby could be dangerous.

"There certainly might be some concern about those aspects," said Al Smith, president of the Galesburg Chamber of Commerce, which has expressed an interest in luring the prison. "Some of them may be well-founded."

To address those concerns, his office is researching whether the town's crime rate rose after the opening of the nearby Henry C. Hill Correctional Center.

Others are making appeals to common sense.

"They are in prison all the time. They don't let them out to wander the city," said Streator Mayor Richard "Moose" Conner, whose town suffered after a glass-manufacturing plant closed and took 490 jobs and a \$13 million payroll.

Flora Mayor Joetta Shrum used a similar tack when that community bid — and failed to get — a federal prison in 1987.

"A lot of people were afraid what would happen if some prisoners escaped," she said. "I just told them that if some did, the first thing they would do is try to get as far away from Flora as possible."

The super-maximum prison would employ 300 people and have a \$15 million annual budget. About 250 construction jobs also are expected. Gov. Jim Edgar on Wednesday signed into law a package of prison reforms that paves the way for its construction over two years.

"I wrote a letter the minute they

announced it," said Conner, of Streator.

"Anything that would create jobs, we're interested in," said Rushville Mayor Dennis Yates.

Canton has found that crime can pay. The state's decision to build a medium-security prison there in 1986 was a major shot in the arm to the community, which was wracked by the closing of its major employer, International Harvester.

"We've had a very good experience with the Illinois River Correctional Center," said Canton economic development director Chris Spears, who also wants the super-max prison in his town. "It's been a very big boost to our economy."

The Corrections Department is in the early stages of drawing up specifications for the prison site. Communities that express an interest will be sent a form to fill out to see if they're qualified for consideration.

They must apply by Sept. 15, with regional hearings to follow and a recommendation to the governor scheduled for mid-October.

Demographic data, including an area's unemployment rate and concentration of state workers, land, utilities and a sound transportation system will be taken into account, said Corrections spokesman Nic Howell.

Corrections Director Howard Peters has said he wants to use inmates from other facilities as part of the super-max work force, as groundskeepers, cafeteria workers and laborers, so there has been early speculation that downstate areas near existing prisons, like Canton and Galesburg, will be favored.

Some communities already have parcels of land identified that they will tout for the super-max site. Spears said Canton may explore sites that it planned to use in a bid for the federal prison, which ultimately went to Pekin.

Applicants also may offer free land and utilities to the state as incentives.

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law partners in the firm's Chicago office: June A. Lehrer, Deborah K. Boling, Terrence R. Brady, L. MacCarthy, Peter C. McCabe III, William G. Weber III. Emil Arca was named a partner in the firm.

en. Muchin & Zavis has named Karen Randall of the firm's West Coast offices.

black woman in this country to hold a managing major law firm, according to the firm. She has a position in the Los Angeles office that is working with the Irvine, Calif., office. Howard L. Muchin is a managing partner.

When Muchin in 1991, Randall had served as a former FBI director William B. Webster. She is in the Los Angeles Police Commission that is the government's response to the riots that erupted in the city.

aled

Judiciary Committee hearing scheduled for the Chicago Bar Association has been canceled due to a problem that has been called to address the Chicago

rescheduled as soon as possible, according to spokeswoman Jahn.

For information regarding the hearing, contact Nancy Jerome, Public Affairs, at (312) 554-2060.

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sued Aldi Inc., accusing the grocery store chain of discrimination in the firing of two women who worked in

located in the Chicago suburb of Batavia, did not sue Wednesday seeking reaction to the complaint. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission charged that Kristin Callies were fired in May 1991 for allegedly supposedly violated store policy, although the company said employees was tolerated.

filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court in

will be held Friday for Richard F. Babcock, a man who died Monday. He was 76. The hearing is on authority on land use and zoning law, Mr. Babcock of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, American Planning Association, chairman of the commission on the Clean Air Act and a member of the National Advisory Commission on the Clean Air

or litigated zoning ordinances for Chicago and Illinois. He was a partner at Ross & Hardies from

an undergraduate of Dartmouth College, he received a law degree from the University of Chicago. The hearing will be held at 2 p.m. Friday at the Court of Appeals, 221 Dean St., Woodstock. Memorials requested in lieu of flowers.

When 31-year-old murderer Joe Louis Wise went to Virginia's electric chair late Tuesday, he became the 220th person executed in America since 1977, when Gary Gilmore's death before a Utah firing squad ended a 10-year hiatus for capital punishment.

Last year there were 31 executions.

"The death penalty is the violent response of a violent society to the violence it both fears and is fascinated by," said Herman Schwartz, an American University law professor. "Violence in movies and television is pervasive, so it must be a popular commodity. The death penalty represents revenge against

approaching 3,000. It's inevitable more of them will be exhausting their appeals," she said.

Dingerson said the nation's courts have grown impatient with capital punishment disputes. "We're seeing more and more cases tossed out of the courts, especially federal courts, that would have been heard five years ago," she said. "The courts are more and more willing to let states pull the switch."

Dingerson criticized the pace of executions in Texas, but William Zapalac, an assistant attorney general in Austin, said his state merely

Continued on page 16  
EXECUTIONS

C.D.L.B. 9/16/93 (P.3)

# Illinois communities fight for maximum-security prison site

SPRINGFIELD (AP) — More than 40 communities across the state are fighting for a chance to host 500 of Illinois' most violent and dangerous prison inmates in a super-maximum security prison.

The payoff? About 300 permanent jobs and an annual budget of \$15 million.

"It creates a large number of relatively high-paying jobs that are stable," said Rockford Community Development Director Diane Vonneida. "On the other hand, it's a maximum-security prison. It's a very, very difficult neighbor to situate for residential areas."

The Department of Corrections closed the application process for the \$60 million project Wednesday, but would not immediately say how many communities had applied. Department spokesman Nic Howell said he would provide a list of applicants' names late today, but said reporters would not be able to look at the applications.

Corrections officials plan to hold regional meetings at the end of the month with applicants in southern, central and northern Illinois before selecting a site, Howell said. A recommendation to Gov. Jim Edgar is due by mid-October.

Rockford, Pontiac and Dixon are among three of the latest entries

into the contest for the project. Officials in Pontiac and Dixon decided last week to apply for the prison; a Rockford-area coalition of business leaders is offering three sites for the department to consider.

"We in Pontiac know better than most communities in the state the pluses and minuses of having a prison in the community," Mayor Mike Ingles said. "We can always change our minds later. All we're saying now is that we want to be considered."

Other communities that have applied for the prison range from Lawrenceville in the southeastern part of the state to Kewanee in the northwest, officials have said.

Not everyone supports the idea of the super-maximum security prison. At least one human rights organization condemns them as inhumane. And state Rep. E.J. "Zeke" Giorgi, D-Rockford, acknowledged that some residents in his area had strongly opposed past proposals to build a prison there.

"The guys supposed to be housed there are the real bad guys. That means if someone escapes, the whole community is on pins and needles until the guy is caught," Giorgi said.

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## THE LIABILITIES

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