

## HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COVERAGE, C1

## APPLAUSE: INSIDE THE HOMES SECTION



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SIDEKICKS, E1

# The Bakersfield Californian

## Growth

# New BC campus proposed

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South Bakersfield's landscape could be transformed with plans for a 1,600-acre development, including a master-planned residential community and a new college campus.

Bakersfield College and Bolthouse

Properties LLC hammered out a deal approved during a closed-session board of trustees meeting of the Kern Community College District held in Bishop.

The campus would be along Highway 99 south of Bear Mountain Boulevard, according to district officials, and continue the college's mission of serving students in far-flung areas of Kern County and neighboring counties.

Already, there's major excitement about the prospects.

"Any time you increase the opportunity for someone to be educated is a good thing," Kern County Superintendent of Schools Larry E. Reider said upon hearing the news Friday night.

Kern County, he said, is one of the

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## PLAN: College would be big asset in area, Arvin official says

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few in the state where school enrollment is growing. The expansion is a natural fit with the county's growth and development.

Bolthouse Properties, no longer affiliated with Bolthouse Farms, donated 66 acres to the college district. As part of the agreement, KCCD has purchased the adjoining 60 acres, for a campus site totaling 126 acres. It's not known how much public money will be spent because officials with the information declined requests for comment.

The campus would be part of an integrated community with low- and medium-density residential space, schools, parks and commercial and industrial sites. Officials with the district and Bolthouse Properties would not provide further details on the plans.

Money for the southside land purchase came from the Safety Repair and Improvement District bond approved by voters in 2002, according to a college district press release.

Commercial and retail ventures might have ties to the college's career and technical programs.

Anthony Leggio, president of

Bolthouse Properties, said this kind of partnership has been successful in other communities. It's a proactive approach to design a community with a college campus in mind, he said.

He said he doesn't foresee traffic burdens in the area because major infrastructure — Highway 99 — is already in place.

Leggio said plans are conceptual at this point, but they'll be taken to the county planning department in the "immediate future." He did not specify a date.

The parties expect to close escrow before year's end, he said.

The college development appeared to be a welcome surprise to many.

"If Bakersfield College builds a campus there, it's going to be a nice campus," said Arvin City Councilman Steven Ojeda. "They would have no problems getting students there."

Ojeda said it can be quite a chore for Arvin residents to travel to Bakersfield College in northeast Bakersfield, or to Taft College, where many take classes. But the opportunity for higher education closer to home will clearly be welcomed by Arvin families.

"There are a lot of people here who don't go to college because

the distance is an obstacle," Ojeda said.

John Lopez, president of the BC's Student Government Association, said the campus will be a welcome addition to an expanding city.

"A lot of friends I had would come to BC from Arvin and it's a good 40-minute drive to get to BC," he said.

Asked what he'd like to see on a new campus, the computer science and math major mentioned he'd like access to wireless Internet and an emphasis on technology at the new site.

The other public college district in the county, West Kern Community College District, even attracts students who find it more convenient to the southwest and south Bakersfield homes or businesses.

"Evidently Bakersfield College is pretty well saturated because we receive some of the students who might go there," said John Miller, a board member of the district that governs Taft College. He said a new campus along Highway 99 should be pretty attractive to students.

This isn't the Bakersfield College's first foray into such a project. There are plans for a 63-acre campus in northwest Bakersfield

near Kratzmeyer Road and the Rio Bravo-Greeley Union School District, but the project is on hold, college President Bill Andrews has said.

In the spring, county planners did not lend support to several residential projects in the northwest, said county Planning Director Ted James. That's because planners want a traffic system that can handle growth in the area, and the county is working with the city to address that.

The projects were not denied, however, and developers were told they could continue. The northwest campus was not among the stalled projects.

In late 2005, the district bought 225 acres at the southeast corner of Kratzmeyer Road and Enos Lane, north of Sullivan Road and west of Superior Road.

Officials hoped to offer classes by 2015, but it's unknown when the project will be back on the table. Plans for that project also included 852 single- and multiple-family units, James said.

The district is developing a specific plan and environmental impact report for the project, James said.