

# SV eyes Borland's Polo Ranch

## Decides high school site negotiations should move on to willing seller

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SCOTTS VALLEY — School officials are negotiating with Borland to buy its Polo Ranch property as the site for the district's first high school.

Based on an agreement signed with Borland, the district has 60 days to reach a deal with the software company, Superintendent Andre LaCouture said Wednesday.

The Polo Ranch is the third site to be explored by school officials who are racing to be ready to educate high school students by September 1998.

The property under study includes the 116-acre ranch and a 6.7-acre parcel known as "the pad," where Borland had sought to build the second phase of its world headquarters. That building project is off the drawing board.

The district's architect and building consultant are scheduled to meet with Borland officials today and walk the site.

Discussions with Greystone Homes, a Pleasanton home builder, were put on hold to accommodate the school district, Grady said.

"We appreciate the opportunity," LaCouture said.

Neither Grady nor LaCouture would discuss price because of the ongoing negotiations.

The district has encountered one obstacle after another in trying to locate a site for a school. The state says 40 acres are needed.

Initially, administrators had expected Kaiser Sand and Gravel would donate property to the district. Just before the vote on a \$22.7 million bond issue in

November 1994, Kaiser advised the district to drop consideration of its property.

Nine months later, the Geyer Road quarry was rated as the top prospect by the district's site selection committee, which expected it would cost less than others to buy and develop. But the owners have been unwilling to come to the table, and trustees feared acquiring the property through condemnation would require litigation that would prove too expensive.

The Polo Ranch, which was ranked second by the site selection committee, appears more attractive now, because Borland is a "willing seller," said Trustee Mark Witzig.

It isn't clear when trustees would get reports from the architect or building consultant.

"Hopefully as soon as possible," Witzig said. "The architect knows we wanted a site identified by the first part of June."

LaCouture agreed a decision must be made quickly if the district is to meet the 1998 timeline.

"Time is of the essence," he said.

Vine Hill parent Pam Lawson, who served on the site selection committee, is eager to explore the Polo Ranch.

"Mistakes were made on the Kaiser site," she said, adding that "the district is frustrated by lack of progress on the Geyer property."

But despite the difficulties, she remains committed to the idea of a Scotts Valley high school.

"I voted for the high school because I wanted kids to go to school here," she said.