

Bible school to leave Scotts Valley, sell site

Bethany College eyes Sacramento area

McClatchy News Service

Bethany Bible College, an accredited four-year school in Santa Cruz County, plans to move to the Sacramento region by 1993 and establish a new campus, perhaps at Mather Air Force Base, a college official disclosed Wednesday.

Lou Ritz, a member of the school's board of trustees, said representatives from the school earlier this week toured Mather, which will be closed in three years, and are considering it as a possible site for a campus.

He said Bethany officials also are looking at property in the Southport area of West Sacramento and

the Rocklin and Elk Grove areas. He said the school's wooded 109-acre campus in Scotts Valley would be put on the market later this year.

The asking price is expected to be about \$30 million.

"We think (Mather) would do quite well," Ritz said. "We could adjust quite nicely to that site. The facilities would meet our needs."

He said college representatives hoped to tour the base again Thursday.

No decisions have been made on how Mather's 5,840

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Bethany College hopes to sell site for \$30 million

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acres will be converted to civilian use after the Air Force leaves in 1993. A citizens group, the Sacramento Area Commission on Mather Conversion, is preparing a draft plan of how the installation might be used.

Suggestions have included a federal prison, a regional park, low- and moderate-income housing and an industrial air park and air cargo center. In addition, the California National Guard, Air Force Reserve, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and U.S. Forest Service are expected to use Mather's runways, hangars and other facilities.

Los Rios Community College District and Sacramento City Unified School District also have expressed interest in locating campuses on the base.

Ritz said Bethany probably would spend "upward of \$20 million" for a new campus for its 500 students and 24 full-time faculty members who will be relocating in the Sacramento area.

Ritz said the college has an annual budget of about \$5 million. He said the board of trustees voted April 26 to sell its existing campus and move to the greater Sacramento area because of "reduced housing costs for both faculty and students, in addition to an expanded student base."

At the same meeting, trustees also voted to change the name of the school to Bethany College of the Assemblies of God.

Ritz said students at the school can earn either Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degrees.