

Bethany to buy new site

McClatchy News Service

SACRAMENTO — Bethany College, a religious school in Scotts Valley, has signed an agreement to purchase the Beverly Garland Hotel near Cal Expo and move there, according to school board members.

The proposed purchase price is about \$6 million, sources said.

The college's board of trustees last year approved a plan to move the school to the Sacramento area by this summer, but extended its date of departure to 1995 to after unsuccessful searches for a new home.

Formerly called Bethany Bible College, the school is more than 70 years old and has a student body of about 500, said Phil Oates, a trustee and son of prominent Sacramento developer Marvin "Buzz" Oates. The school is affiliated with the Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal Protestant denomination.

Bethany's board voted two years ago to move the school to the Sacramento area, and has been scouting for a location since, said Lew Ritz, a local developer and Bethany trustee.

The college first expressed interest in the Beverly Garland on Tribute Road across Business 80 from Cal Expo, some time ago, Ritz said. But the owner — the Carpenters Pension Trust for Southern California — was in negotiations with Home Depot, which planned to demolish the hotel and build a warehouse-type retail outlet, Ritz said.

Home Depot backed away from the deal after neighboring businesses protested that the store would create too much traffic. At that point, the Carpenters union contacted Bethany again, Ritz said. Oates said the Bethany board approved the purchase agreement in June.

With the agreement, Ritz said, Bethany has the exclusive right for 90 days to purchase the building while it investigates various aspects of the deal, such as whether the city will allow it to operate a school on the hotel site and whether it can obtain financing.

The purchase also depends on Bethany completing the sale of its existing facility to San Jose developers John Nicholson and Barry Swenson. They were in escrow at last report.

If the sale goes through, it will probably take a year to move the school, during which time the hotel could continue to operate, Ritz said. The building would eventually be used for student housing and classrooms.

Sentinel staff writer John Bessa contributed to this story.