

Ukiah Daily Journal

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\$2,500,000 for former MSH

Vinifera purchases hospital at Talmage

Vinifera of San Francisco has acquired the former Mendocino State Hospital for \$2,500,000, it was announced late this morning from the Sacramento office of Paul Savoni, chief land agent for the Department of General Services.

Vinifera is also the owner of a 60-acre parcel off Low Gap Road adjoining the Ukiah cemetery on the west. The San Francisco firm is currently negotiating with the Ukiah Unified school district for sale of the acreage to provide a site for a new Ukiah high school with partial funding for the school approved by the voters in the June 4 primary.

Acquisition of the former state hospital is now subject to review by the state public works board. The sale must receive the approval of the state agency.

Vinifera was the sole bidder for the hospital and its sprawling grounds when the facility was extensively advertised for sale in April of this year. Their bid of \$2,500,000 at that time was rejected for the reason that Vinifera, according to the Department of General Services, imposed conditions not acceptable to the state. Savoni chose not to comment on what these conditions were.

W. Andrew Beckstoffer, president of Vinifera, was not available for comment before press time. He did divulge to Savoni that his company was considering the former state hospital for a number of possible uses, but that it was Beckstoffer's intent to work with the community toward finding some compatible usage.

Savoni said the mothball crew of 16 employees that has been maintaining the

hospital since it was phased out would be off the grounds by June 30, and responsibility for the facility would be transferred from the Department of Health to the Department of General Services.

The sale includes 490 acres of rich agricultural land plus the 247 acres decoted to the 27 major structures, for a total of 737 acres.

The rich agricultural land had been eyed by local and other agriculturists but the state held to a policy of the hospital being sold as a package. One 10-acre parcel was sold to the Ukiah Valley Association for the Retarded. UVAR is presently using one of the outbuildings for its program but will be

forced to vacate by July 31.

In the event that the sale now in escrow, is approved, Vinifera may take occupancy by July 5.

One of the oldest structures of its kind in California, the hospital opened in 1910. The ward buildings were added in 1932 and the R&T, administration and commissary buildings in the early 1950's.

The county was unable to secure a tenant for the structure after the hospital was phased out. A number of educational institutions evidenced some interest, including Mendocino College, which could not meet an annual rental in excess of \$400,000 which the state was asking.