

Probe of \$8.1 Million Records System Slated

County Orders Inquiry to Determine if Faulty Equipment Was Installed in Sheriff's Project

BY CHARLES DONALDSON

Times Staff Writer

An investigation was ordered by Los Angeles County supervisors Tuesday to determine whether a faulty video-file records system was installed in a \$19.5 million sheriff's microwave communications project.

Arthur G. Will, chief administrative officer, said he hoped to report in 30 days whether the system meets contract specifications—a decision which could lead to a court suit against the builder.

Ampex Corp., developer of the equipment, designated as ORACLE, for Optimum Records Automation for Courts and Law Enforcement, delivered the first units in August, 1971. The county paid rentals totaling \$628,000, but halted them in December of that year in a dispute over performance of the equipment.

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County officials say the system works, but the question is: Does it meet the performance specifications spelled out in the contract?

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Supervisor Kenneth Hahn initiated the call for a review and report by Will in 30 days on the ORACLE situation, saying, "Maybe it is a giant boondoggle," and adding he had heard the county was going to court over the system's performance.

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possible when something does not meet contract specifications. But this is not a simple piece of equipment and a rather considerable amount of staff time has been invested seeking the answers. We are in discussion with the company and I hope to have the talks completed within the 30-day period you set for the report."

Will said the video-file aspect of the program amounted to a total of \$8.1 million and said the remainder of the spending goes toward the sheriff's microwave communication and dispatch systems which will be used with or without ORACLE.

He said \$1.4 million spent to prepare the Hall of Justice and sheriff's stations for the new equipment was necessary work.

In other actions the county voted to increase the fee for its 15 golf courses effective July 1. The new rate for an 18-hole round of play will be \$3.50 on weekdays and \$4 on weekends and holidays. Currently the rate is \$3 for weekdays and \$3.50 for weekends and holidays.

The senior citizen rate also will be increased, from \$1 to \$1.25.

The increases were approved in an effort to reduce county losses on its golf course operations.

The supervisors also:

—Individually honored members of the Verbum Dei High School basketball team from the Watts area for winning the school's fifth straight CIF Southern Section championship.

—Called for a report within 60 days on the possibility of buying "new, highly sophisticated fire fighting equipment," including special fire suits, that have been developed

Please Turn to Page 5, Col. 1

Continued from First Page

by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

—Ordered the POW and MIA flags that have been flying at county fire stations and sheriff's offices taken down so they can be given to former prisoners of war during May ceremonies being planned by the county for the returnees.

—Called for a study of the possible merger of the 35-man county Harbor Patrol that polices Marina del Rey and the Castaic Lakes with the Department of Beaches.

[This COPY is repeated almost verbatim in this companion article by Charles Donaldson (attached in this PDF):

Charles Donaldson. (Mar. 28, 1973). INQUIRY ORDERED INTO \$8 MILLION [ORACLE, AMPLEX] RECORDS SYSTEM. The Los Angeles Times.

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Document Type: CREST

Collection: General CIA Records

Document Number (FOIA) / ESDN (CREST): CIA-RDP79-00498A000300110022-2

Release Decision: RIPPUB

Original Classification: K

Document Page Count: 2

Document Creation Date: December 12, 2016

Document Release Date: April 12, 2002

Sequence Number: 22

Case Number:

Content Type: NSPR

File: Attachment Size CIA-RDP79-00498A000300110022-2.pdf 109.08 KB Body: Approved For Release 2002/06/05 CIA-RbP79-004

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Please Turn to Page 6, Col. 7

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Continued from First Page
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p. 1

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Los Angeles
in
CC R PART II
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 1973

ART SEIDENBAUM Oscar of the Mouth

This is the day after Oscar was promiscuous, the season when the amusement academies are making their annual awards in stage, disc and publicity, when Emmy is a love object for the community that enjoys ego intercourse above all other relationships.

This is also the season when the Apartment Players, a modest legitimate outfit, present their Frederick Ruffalo Award—sometimes known as the Mickey Mouth—to the public figure with the most original performance by a tongue in the previous 12 months.

The Ruffalo honor is not limited to stage, screen or tube. Politicians, protest leaders and even professors are eligible as long as they say more than they mean—or do less than they promise.

Derek Hale, award committee chairman, announces that nominations for the April 1 ceremonies are now closed. Good. Since we don't belong to the April fool academy, then the Apartment Players will do their own honors. But there's no harm in reviewing the rhetoric of 1972 for our own fun.

Ghost Subject
No Oscar or Emmy candidate could hope to surpass the performance of Clifford Irving, who managed to turn the living Howard Hughes into a false legend. Irving invented the category of ghost subject rather than ghost writer, in which the real man of a biography never really appears at all.

Sen. George McGovern deserves honorable mention for his pledge of 1,000% support, raising perfection to an impossible new power in presidential campaigns. When McGovern later withdrew his extravagant pledge, he only compounded his qualifications for the award.

Who can forget the immortal lines of the Watergate capers who claimed to be spying on the Democratic Party in order to prevent violence? They are continuing this rhetorical peep show into 1973.

Mark Spitz, the Olympic swimmer, merits consideration for taking a dive in a milk bath. He proved that you may have to crawl before you talk, but even then the results can be disappointing. No American hero has splashed so magnificently in the books and so poorly in the channels.

Hartke Award
Sen. Vance Hartke of Indiana earns a nomination for buckner for having refused to let his luggage be searched before boarding an airplane. He will honorably be left standing on principle while the rest of the world goes by.

My favorite local candidate continues to be Mayor Sam Yorty, for consistently managing to put his mouth where the rest of him isn't. In 1972, his wife redeemed him with Blue Chip stamps. Alas, his 1973 statement that "forces from the outside" are trying to take over L.A. is not eligible.

And we need a woman as a token tongue in the competition, for a year in which pig was so often the last word. Why not Brigitte Bardot who insists that while men are beasts, real beasts behave much better?

Good luck, Apartment Players, in a noble effort to give rhetoric the recognition it so richly deserves. There are still misguided inser-tions who think they've said a mouthful with the fulsome phrase.

PART II INDEX
ORANGE COUNTY NEWS, Pages 4, 5, 6, 7, 14.
SILVERLEAF COUNTY CLASSIFIED, Pages 8-11.
TIMES EDITORIALS, Page 12.
LETTERS TO THE TIMES, Pages 12, 13, 14.
INTERLANDI, Page 13.
JOSEPH KRATZ, Page 13.
DAVID S. BRODIE, Page 13.
BOY WILKINS, Page 13.
VITALA, WEATHER, Page 2.

Mother's Vigil for Kidnaped Baby



Tommy Michael Lauver Jr., ... his mother waits, remembers.

BY LEE HARRIS
Times Staff Writer

At night, Mrs. Frances May Lauver can be heard crying herself to sleep in her room.

"Sometimes you go in and try and comfort her, other times you just go on by," said her mother.

Most of the time, Frances Lauver just waits. And does nothing.

"Then she remembers. She remembers the happiness the baby brought into the house."

She remembers that he liked ginger snaps, licorice, Ritz crackers and chocolate cookies.

She remembers that he enjoyed playing peekaboo and biting the cat.

Then the memories of horror push their way into her mind.

It had all begun routinely.

The day was Jan. 20—the day 11-month-old Tommy Michael Lauver Jr. took his first steps. That afternoon, Mrs. Lauver took her son with her to a shopping center near their Modesto home.

Sitting in the Granada Hills home of her mother the other day, Mrs. Lauver, 22, recalled what happened next:

The box boy placed the groceries in her 1957 station wagon. She put Tommy in his car seat on the front seat of the vehicle and started to fumble with the ignition keys.

"I love you," a voice said as her car door suddenly swung open.

"Act cool and nothing will happen," said a thin man with reddish brown hair. He reached a pocket knife into her side, making a superficial wound.

She moved over and the man drove out of the parking lot and into the country.

He asked for her driver's license, saying he wanted to know how to get in touch with her.

Colleges' Plan for Inter-Campus Degrees Gains

Students Would Be Able to Earn BA or MA From School Without Attending

BY NOEL GREENWOOD
Times Staff Writer

The State University and Colleges system Tuesday took its first step toward creation of regional and statewide degree programs for both undergraduate and graduate students.

A committee of state university trustees endorsed the programs in principle, and the full board of trustees is expected to give its approval today at a meeting in Los Angeles.

The regional programs would be for students who are unable to find the degree offering they want at their nearest state university or college campus, and are unable to attend a distant campus that does offer the degree.

The statewide program would enroll students who could live anywhere in the state, studying largely on their own. Their degrees would be awarded by the system's board of trustees instead of an individual campus.

Off-Campus Locations

Both proposals are an outgrowth of the external degree program now operating from six state university campuses with an enrollment of about 1,000. That program takes existing degree offerings to off-campus locations for students, most of them working adults, who are unable or unwilling to enroll in a traditional on-campus program.

The regional and statewide degree proposals unveiled Tuesday, however, would go well beyond that approach.

One reason for the proposals is that state university officials are anxious to head off the development in California of a new and separate public higher education system that would offer non-traditional degree programs throughout the state.

Legislation to establish such a system has been introduced in the State Senate, and a joint legislative committee headed by Assemblyman John Vasconcelos (D-San Jose) is developing a similar proposal of its own.

There's a need in this state and the question is, who's going to fill it? state university trustee W. O. Weisbach said Tuesday, alluding to the rapidly developing competition for the traditional student.

Joint Programs Seen

The proposal for regional degree programs stems chiefly from the fact that not all 19 of the state university and college campuses offer the same degree.

"For example, California State College, Sonoma, located near Santa Rosa in Northern California, offers no master's degree in engineering. But under the regional approach, the state university campus at Santa Francisco could extend its engineering program to the Sonoma campus. The two campuses would then issue a joint master's degree."

The Sonoma campus would be spared the need to mount a new engineering program, and its students at the same time would not be forced to go elsewhere to earn their engineering degree.

County Endorses Break for Veterans in Testing for Jobs

BY DON SMITH
Times Staff Writer

SANTA ANA—A program to give veterans preferential treatment in getting county jobs with the endorsement Tuesday of the Board of Supervisors.

By a 4-1 vote, board members asked County Administrative Officer Robert Thomas to come up with a system covering veterans and disabled veterans within the next 30 days.

The action came after supervisors had been told that the county is one of only three in California which does not have some kind of program which gives extra credit to veterans when testing for public jobs.

However, Personnel Department officials said such points would be of little value under the county's merit system which does not correspond to civil service programs in use elsewhere.

However, Personnel Director William Hart said the supervisors could, if they wished, add veterans to the list of groups receiving preferential hiring treatment under the Affirmative Action Program.

That policy, he explained, thus far has been geared to improving the county's ratio of ethnic minorities and women. In addition, he noted, the county is making efforts to hire certain classes of ex-convicts and those in rehabilitation programs such as methadone maintenance for former heroin users.

"We have not been neglecting the veterans," Hart added. "Roughly half of those hired under the Public Employment Program (PEP) are veterans and, in addition, we have two special Vietnam era veterans programs in effect. Of the 678 persons hired under PEP and the two

FAREWELL AT PICO HOUSE Fiesta for 2,000 Planners Will Be Held in L.A. Park

BY RAY HERBERT
Times Staff Writer

A Mexican fiesta is being planned for 2,000 visiting city planners at Los Angeles' Pico Park and its restored shops, the historic Pico House, where only limited gatherings are normally allowed.

The party will be staged outdoors within a temporary enclosure to keep the public out. Guests will mill around the park's streets and wander through the Pico House, which fire officials consider unsafe.

The planners also will be led down into the Pueblo's mysterious "cave-combs," another concern for firemen.

The fiesta will serve as a gala farewell for many of the 4,000 planning commissioners, planning directors and public officials attending the American Society of Planning Officials' 1973 national planning conference next month.

Recently the Pico House, the city's first major hotel, figured in a controversy over a suburban high school's unsuccessful attempt to use the building for a senior prom.

A school representative was told "a bill" was needed to get permission to use it.

The Pico House was built in 1870. Part of it formed as part of the Pueblo historic park near the downtown Civic Center. It has been declared a historic landmark for groups of 50 or more, but exceptions have been made.

"The building doesn't meet standards for virtually any use," said Louis Segal, fire prevention engineer in the state fire marshal's office here, after inspecting it for the fiesta.

Station Chief Stanley Borden of the Los Angeles Fire Department called it a problem for the city.

It also has been a recurring headache for El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park Commission, the state-county-city body which runs the park's surrounding Los Angeles Old Plaza.

Just how the building should be used has been clouded as far as some commissioners are concerned.

A 1970 memo from William M. Proctor, the commission's general manager, cited its use for "official county and public officials who would help enhance the (Pueblo) project."

At the time the high school group

Noise Curb Rule Deleted for Project Standard Impossible to Meet, Engineer Says

BY JACK BOETTNER
Times Staff Writer

ANAHEIM—The City Council voted Tuesday to delete a noise control standard on a proposed housing project to be built on property in the city's southeast.

Thornton E. Piersall holds an interest in the project.

The vote was 4 to 1. Councilman William J. Thom cast the negative vote, contending that it was consistent with his stand against low-medium density developments in Santa Ana Canyon.

Piersall did not attend the meeting but sent a memorandum to the council. It said that Piersall does have a financial interest in the land in the subject tract No. 7422.

The 16.5 acres, planned for development into 85 single family house lots with a minimum of 3,000 square feet, is about 1.5 miles east of Imperial Highway, between Esperanza Road and La Palma Ave.

The Planning Commission had approved the project on condition that the developer comply with noise statement standards recommended by the County Health Department—65 decibels outside and 45 decibels in the home sleeping area.

FLOOD INSURANCE: RED FLAG FOR LOAN INDUSTRY?

SANTA ANA—Ever since Orange County agreed to take part in a federally subsidized flood insurance program, local and federal officials have been puzzled by the lack of response by county homeowners.

Tuesday, they may have gotten some of the answers.

H. G. Osborne, chief engineer of the County Flood Control District, told county supervisors that only 136 flood policies had been written in the entire county despite publicity about the current inadequacy of Prud'Homme.

"That might be because it is expensive and serves as a red flag to lenders and realtors," commented County Supervisors Chairman Ronald Casper, who is chairman of a county savings and loan association.

RESIDENTS FIGHT ADDRESS CHANGES

BY STEVE EMMONS
Times Staff Writer

LAGUNA HILLS — A few of Robert Greco's neighbors have knocked under, but Greco vows he will never change his house number.

Officials of the county's Building and Safety Department seem just as determined that Greco and his 13 neighbors make the change. The numbers assigned to the houses 610 years ago, but they should be even.

"Houses on the south and east sides of streets get even numbers," said J. W. Wolfe, chief of the department's land use division.

"That's the way the system is from one end of the county to the other. There is a totally unacceptable situation."

Wolfe concedes that his department made the original mistake and assigned wrong numbers, but he said recent developments have made the change necessary.

Greco, who circulated a petition among the neighbors on Coteau Drive and has threatened court with a lawsuit, said the change makes no sense and will cause nothing but inconvenience. "And I'm tired of government bureaucrats trying to shove things down my throat," he added.

No one seemed to notice when new houses were built recently on Coteau Drive. The numbers on the new houses were the same as the numbers across the street.

Wolfe explained that the new houses were assigned the correct address numbers, the same numbers that 815 years ago were wrongly assigned to the southside houses.

No one seemed to notice the error until the developer went to utility companies to apply for service. Their files showed those addresses were already being served.

The developers complained to the county and soon residents in the older homes received letters from Wolfe.

The two-page letters explained how the mistake was made, cited the law giving the district its legal powers and ordered the numbers changed.

"The only appropriate way to set

Fund Impound Endangers UCI Program for Stroke Victims

BY GEORGE WETZ
Times Staff Writer

One of the most successful medical programs in the fight against heart disease, stroke and cancer had its beginnings in Orange County, but may meet its end in the White House.

The program to train volunteers to help in the "rehabilitation" of stroke victims—that is, to help them patients once again lead normal lives—could terminate because of the impoundment of funds by the Nixon Administration.

In stressing the importance of the program, Dr. Robert Combs, assistant dean of the UC Irvine college of medicine and coordinator of Area VIII of the California Regional Medical Programs (RAMP), said it has not always been recognized that many stroke patients can lead normal lives.

"I think our program of training volunteers has had a lot to do with the acknowledgement that stroke victims can come out of the back bedroom and go into society," Combs said in an interview.

"It used to be pretty general thought that people who had had strokes were done for, at least as far as most of their social contacts were concerned," he said.

"We have shown that they can go a long way back toward the kind of life they had before, many of them all the way."

The stroke volunteer training program was begun by Area VIII, which has its headquarters at UCI. Area VIII is part of the California regional medical program, which is part of the national effort against the three major causes of death. That program was begun af-

8 1/2-Year-Old Error: 'Sorry, Wrong Numbers'

BY STEVE EMMONS
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Part II-Wed., Mar. 28, 1973 R Los Angeles Times *

U.S. Commission OKs Electrical Utility Pact

Anaheim to Receive More Than \$2.1 Million From Edison Co., Council Told

ANAHEIM — The city director of utilities told the City Council Tuesday that the Federal Power Commission has approved a settlement agreement involving the Southern California Edison Co. and Anaheim, Banning and Riverside.

The agreement ends two years of litigation over public versus privately owned electrical utilities. Under terms of the agreement, Edison must pay Anaheim \$2.1 million, plus interest from November of 1971, utilities director Gordon Hoyt told councilmen.

Hoyt said the electrical customers in Anaheim—the city has virtually taken over all of the power service—will find no immediate impact on their bill and perhaps never will. He has recommended that the money be spent on building a new electrical substation. Anaheim, which buys electricity from Edison on a wholesale rate, will find its power bill dropping substantially, he said.

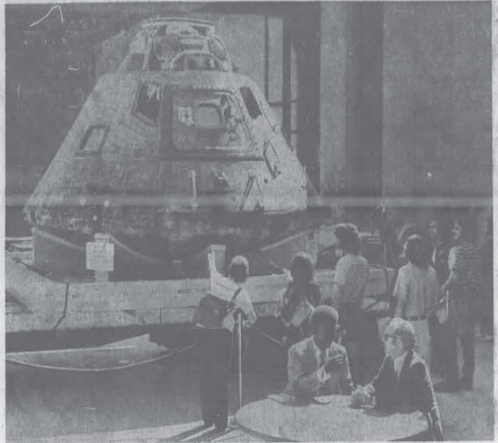
Benefits Cited
But there will be long-range benefits in the agreement, according to Hoyt. "The money is important," Hoyt said in an interview, "but of more importance to us is the fact that we wanted to participate as more than just a customer. Our main interest was to get the ability to generate power and transmit it."

The agreement, Hoyt said, gives the city that ability.

The three main objectives accomplished in the three-city action against Edison, Hoyt said, were the following:

1—Elimination of the requirement that cities must buy all of their power for resale exclusively from Edison.
2—The opportunity to participate in power supply and transmission projects.

Cities' Needs
3—The agreement by Edison to furnish supplemental power to the cities to the extent that the cities' needs exceed their own generation capacity. The settlement has wide-ranging implications, according to Hoyt. He told the council that other municipalities owned and privately owned utilities can apply the same agreement to their situations.



CAPSULE ON DISPLAY—The Apollo 16 spacecraft which carried John Young, Charles Duke and Thomas Mattingly II to the moon last April goes on display at Golden West College's space sciences show in Huntington Beach. Show will run through April 7, except Sunday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Budgeting Practices of L.A. Schools Hit

BY JACK MCGURDY
Times Staff Writer

The Los Angeles city school district was accused Tuesday of falsely claiming it was broke over the last five years.

Robert Ransom, president of the United Teachers of Los Angeles, charged that city school administrators have hidden more than \$200 million in income with budget practices "designed to deliberately deceive the public."

While school officials claimed they were broke, he said, the district has accumulated a concealed surplus of some \$90 million since 1967-68.

By "manipulating" the budget, Ransom contended, the school district's "managers are able to bring items to the school board for passage that are acted upon without regard to the public's rights to know."

Underestimated Income
Here is the way Ransom says the allegedly "deceptive" practices work.

School administrators underestimated income when the school budget was presented to the board each year. After the budgets were adopted by the board, the district received additional funds, primarily from the state and federal governments.

School officials had good reason to know these funds were coming, but no public plans for their expenditure were made. When the funds were received, they were hidden on a piece-meal basis and were never considered as a lump sum.

Thomas Brown, a budget consultant for the California Teachers Assn., said the district, in effect, has taken from its surplus to

finance the school program but then replenished the surplus with the additional funds it receives later in the year.

However, the large surplus never appears in the budget as such. Brown appeared at a news conference with Ransom to make the charges.

Since 1967-68, Brown said, the district has underestimated its income in the budget by 11%, 11%, 7%, 8% and 6% through 1971-72.

He called it a "phony budget."

Bearing the Brunt
Ransom said teachers are "bearing the brunt of the deceptive budget practices" through the existence of lower salaries, larger class sizes and fewer instructional materials in the Los Angeles district.

The budgeting practices, he said, "have harmed the education program and resulted in the district making a less-than-average commitment to providing classroom personnel and instructional materials."

A district spokesman said the Los Angeles schools use the same budgeting procedures followed by all California districts and that when funds are allocated late in the year by the state, a full public discussion is held on their use.

Teacher salaries in Los Angeles, he said, are "very competitive and have kept pace very well with the cost of living rise here."

RECORDS SYSTEM

Continued from First Page
1971. The county paid rentals totaling \$623,000, but halted them in December of that year in a dispute over performance of the equipment.

The program involves use of a computer to retrieve information stored on videotape. As the county envisioned it, an employee in an outlying sheriff's station would be able to have requested records sought out by the computer and televised in a matter of moments.

County officials say the system works, but the question is does it meet the performance specifications spelled out in the contract?

"We have had a long series of technical discussions with Ampex and whether that product meets contract specifications. We are not sure and they are not sure we got what we contracted for. They are as concerned as we are," Will said.

Supervisor Kenneth Hahn initiated the call for a review and report by Will in 30 days on the ORACLE situation, saying, "Maybe it is a giant boogymoogle," and adding he had heard the county was going to court over the system's performance.

Will said, "A lawsuit is always possible when something does not meet contract specifications. But this is not a simple

amount of staff time has been invested seeking the piece of equipment and a rather considerable answer. We are in discussion with the company and I hope to have the talks completed within the 60-day period you set for the report."

Will said the video-tape aspect of the program amounted to a total of \$5.1 million and said the remainder of the spending goes toward the sheriff's microphone communication and dispatch systems which will be used with or without ORACLE.

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NOISE CONTROL

Continued from First Page
An engineer told the council Tuesday that it would be impossible to hold the outdoor noise to 65 decibels through design work. The property lies along the Santa Fe Railroad.

The engineer, Jeff Milliet, said 400 houses have been approved in the area with no noise standard applied.

"We feel that we would be denied a substantial property right that has been enjoyed by others," Milliet said. "We can't come down to the decibels outside but we can stop the noise inside."

At the same time, the council upheld the Planning Commission's requirement that a 152-home development by the Upper "K" Ranch Corp. on the south side of the Riverside Freeway, east of Imperial Highway, hold noise levels to the 65 to 45 decibel ratings.

The corporation plans to build a 6-foot-high earth cover, topped by a 6-foot masonry wall, along the freeway to buffer the noise.

Two tentative tract maps were approved for Upper "K" and one for the property in which Pierwall has an interest. Dudley Frank was listed as owner of the property.

PERMIT APPROVED FOR TRAVEL TRAILER PARK

ANAHEIM — The City Council has given Hironaka Fujishige clearance to transform his strawberry patch in the Disneyland area into a travel trailer park despite opposition from a major hotel and a planning commission recommendation official.

The council vote Tuesday was 5 to 0 to grant a conditional use permit for a 344-space park on acreage at the northeast corner of Harbor Blvd. and the extension of Convention Way.

The commission had contended that the park would be a "blight" in this area of high-rise hotels and high quality commercial-recreation development.

Fujishige appealed to the council. He said he was overburdened with taxes, had sought to bring in a hotel and was unable to get an agricultural preserve status for his 17 acres.

William Armstrong, an official of the Quality Inn, said guests paying \$22 to \$23 a night for rooms facing the trailer park would be facing a "blight."

Councilman Calvin Pebody said he would not consider the park to be a blight and pointed out that three other travel trailer parks have been approved by the city in the Disneyland area. The council did, however, set a 15-year limit on the permit.

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