

# Paris Beacon-News

## News

### Paris Work Camp transfers to city

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Beacon-News Report

Legislation signed into law Wednesday directs the state Director of Corrections to transfer the Ed Jenison Work Camp to the City of Paris by quit claim deed for \$1.



THE 20-ACRE Paris Work Camp, located north of Paris, has been transferred to the City of Paris. The facility will be used as an adult education campus in the future. (Beacon-News File Photo)

Rep. Roger Eddy (R-Hutsonville), one of the key supporters of the legislation, said the transfer is a win-win for both the city and the state.

"The work camp facility has been sitting idle since 2002 when it was closed by former Governor Ryan," said Eddy. "While idle, it has continued to cost the state \$50,000 each year for basic maintenance. This transfer will allow the city to bring the facility back into public use, while relieving the state of its annual maintenance burden."

Ryan's administration said closing the camp was necessary to reduce expenses but it was later revealed the money saved by closing Paris was used to open a similar facility in northern Illinois. The decision was made during an election year and candidate Rod Blagojevich promised to re-open the work camp. It was a promise that was never honored.

Senator Dale Righter (R-Mattoon) shepherded the legislation through the senate.

"This law will help transform property that is not currently serving any purpose and make it useful for the Paris community," said Righter. "This has the potential to do a tremendous amount of good for Paris and the surrounding area."

Prior statements by Paris Mayor Craig Smith indicate the plan is to convert the former prison into an adult education campus providing college level classes and continuing education opportunities for area residents.

"This has only been made possible through the hard work of Representative Eddy and Senator Righter," said Smith. "Our long-term goal is to develop a new high school on the site as well."

Speaking the Paris Economic Development Corporation (PEDCO) Bob Colvin said the transfer creates a new era for education in Edgar County.

Under the terms of the legislation, the transfer of the property is not permanent.

The work camp will revert to state ownership if the city ceases to use it for public purposes.

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