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## Board chooses Oakhurst

By [Jillian Beaudry](#) - The Daily World

Friday, February 26, 2010 1:49 PM PST

MCCLEARY — The commissioners of Grays Harbor Hospital District 1 have chosen the old Oakhurst Convalescent Center site in Elma as their No. 1 pick for a site to build the new \$15 million to \$25 million Mark Reed Hospital.

On Monday, the county commissioners said they would be willing to sell the Oakhurst property to the district for \$1 million.

County Commissioner Terry Willis was thrilled with the news this morning and said the county is going to benefit from the potential as the county has only been collecting rent from two occupants on the site for years.

"Any money coming off that property is going to help the county," Willis said. "This property was well suited to what the hospital's goals were, too. It's a win-win situation for both of us."

Last night in Elma, the district's board was presented with all of the potential sites in Elma and McCleary. There are two proposed locations for the hospital in Elma — Oakhurst and a Green Diamond property about 2 miles west of the fairgrounds.

The McCleary sites are two Green Diamond properties, a combination of four real estate properties and a private piece of property. At last night's meeting, a McCleary resident brought forward another piece of property in McCleary located near the current hospital.

Mark Reed CEO Renée Dunham said the district will move forward with the Oakhurst property, but closely look at the new piece as well, just in case Oakhurst doesn't work out.

She said the decision to choose Oakhurst was fairly easy for the board because members had done their homework on all of the sites, including visits to different properties.

"There were a couple of properties that were easily eliminated," Dunham said. "(Oakhurst) was the best value by far."

She said the board chose Oakhurst for several reasons — the county offered it below its assessed value of \$1.3 million, an analyst suggested the site be located in the City of Elma earlier this month, the potentially low cost of development and beauty of the property.

"One of the top reasons was that it is a naturally beautiful site," Dunham said.

The next step is to conduct an in-depth feasibility study on the property, starting as soon as next week, hoping no problems will be found. She said earlier this week some concerns with the property are the streams and ponds on the site that may present conservation and hydrological issues.

Willis said the county is prepared to sit down with district officials to negotiate terms of how to transfer the property when the district is ready.

Last night the board also approved architects Scherer & Associates from Olympia to do the project.

"I'm excited that we're moving forward, we've got good traction with the project and we're meeting our goals," Dunham said.

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