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County, prison plan land swap; soccer fields may be added

By Andrea Uhde

Oldham County is working with Roederer Correctional Complex to take over about 127 acres of open space at two locations, one to be used for public athletic fields.

Under the plan, Oldham would give up 75 acres off Dawkins Road that it got at no cost from the state in 2006.

In return, the county would get — for free — about 60 acres near the Oldham fairgrounds on Ky. 146, and 68 acres on Ky. 393 north of the state highway garage.

Roederer and the state Department of Corrections still need to sign off on the plan, Judge-Executive Duane Murner said. He expects that to happen soon.

Fiscal Court approved a draft memorandum of the proposal on Jan. 20. The county plans to put fields for soccer, lacrosse and other sports on the Ky. 393 property, Murner said.

"We're desperate to find more soccer fields," he said.

Murner said athletes can use the new fields after the property is leveled off. He said he's not sure when that will happen, "but it should be pretty soon."

The fields the Oldham County Youth Soccer Association uses on Ky. 146 are for sale, so the group will need another spot to practice, Murner said.

The site on Ky. 146 could be used for new county road, maintenance and recycling offices, he said. The present buildings will have to be moved when the state straightens and widens Ky. 393, which Murner said is "probably the worst intersection we have in the entire county."

Under a land-transfer deal in 2006 with the Department of Corrections, Oldham got about 75 acres near the Kentucky State Reformatory, near where Dawkins Road meets Bennett Lane in the La Grange area.

But Murner said recent talks with the reformatory and Roederer have shown that the site is more in the middle of things, and inmates who do manual labor often travel through there.

He said the Department of Corrections owns the land the county hopes to receive, and it's managed by Roederer.

The cost of moving or building the county offices on the new Ky. 146 location would be covered by the state, which Murner said may give Oldham around \$1.4 million for the property. That money would be used for the road realignment.

He said the county also plans to build a fueling station and car-wash facility for county and state-owned vehicles. Building the facility will be in the county's agreement for the land swap, Murner said.

"I think they should have done that from the beginning," said Bruce LeFan, whose family owns a 100-acre farm on Dawkins Road. LeFan was one of many neighbors of the 75-acre site who opposed

the land transfer in 2006. At the time, a new fairgrounds and jail were planned at the site.

LeFan said it makes more sense to use the property near the fairgrounds on Ky. 146 because "it sits right there on the main road."

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