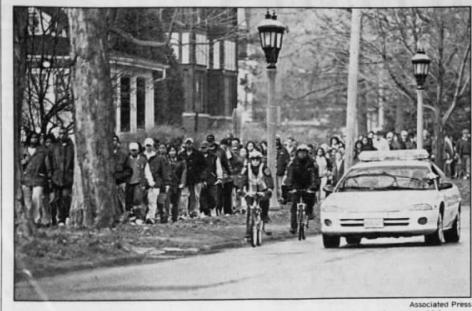


A4 CENTRAL ILLINOIS Decatur, Illinois • Tuesday, November 23, 1999



BACKING STUDENTS: University of Illinois students march toward the federal courthouse in U. bana on Monday, supporting the expelled Decatur high school students.

## HEARING: Dozens stage protest

**Continued from A1**  
would be a one-time extension, and that if the case would be dismissed if he didn't meet the deadline.

Outside the courthouse, Myers said the students' case remains.

"This in no way indicates that the complaint was in such defect that it didn't merit a hearing," Kelly said.

Kelly didn't see that way. McCuskey denied Kelly's request to have the case dismissed.

"This is a waste of time," Kelly said afterward, "but in all fairness the court was giving them an opportunity to speak up."

The aborted hearing was begun with a prayer vigil outside the courthouse. The Rev. Dr. Jackson was not present and was said by his spokeswoman to be "Chicago, Illinois."

Dozens gathered in support — mainly students from the University of Illinois at Urbana.

"The youths who had been the most assistance often receive the

least," said Sandra Gill, a university graduate and local activist who was from a pre-pared statement.

"As students of higher education — in the state of Illinois, we stand in support of this school policy that strips our children of due process," she said.

"We stand in opposition to that which is occurring all over the nation and is highlighted by the incident in Decatur."

The hearing was set to begin on Dec. 27. If McCuskey rules on the students' favor, they should have sufficient time to re-negotiate for another hearing.

Myers could be back in federal court before Dec. 27, however. He filed a motion with the Marion County circuit court to bar Jackson and others from school property.

The school board filed a petition Wednesday in Marion County Circuit Court seeking a temporary restraining order against Jackson, the expelled students and some Rainbow/PUSH Coalition affiliates.

If approved by the circuit court, Jackson and company

would be prohibited from coming within 50 feet of any district property without written con-sent.

That hearing is to begin at 10 a.m. on Dec. 27, before Circuit Judge Jerry L. Patterson.

"We feel that the plaintiffs (the school board) failed to meet their burden of proof," Myers said.

Myers still continues against the temporary restraining order when he appears before Patterson. With that in mind, however, Myers said he will try to move the hearing from circuit court to Decatur to federal court in Urbana.

The "federal" restraining action

Myers filed would take the matter out of the state's hands and bring it before McCuskey. No hearing date in federal court has been set.

According to the federal removal action, the school board is "acting under color of state law" to violate the defendants' of their rights to freedom of speech, expression, assembly and association as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution."

## Panel reports on joint-use facility

**Subcommittee concludes Forsyth could raise \$14 million for proposed project.**

By BRETT WILCOXON  
Daily Staff Writer

**FORSYTH** — The village of Forsyth could raise \$14 million toward the construction of a joint-use facility, and the state would likely contribute \$4 million, according to a finance subcommittee formed to examine the project.

That's one of several progress reports offered Monday by a subcommittee to the Village of Forsyth/Macon-Forsyth School District Joint Use Steering Committee.

The committee formed in July to evaluate the feasibility of a new community recreation center and high school that would relieve overcrowding in the school district.

The committee found that a new high school would allow the high to move to the current high school and the aged, overcrowded Macon grade school to move into the junior high.

But before any move could be made a new building must be built. And officials agree that this can only be accomplished in the near future if Forsyth voters approve home rule in the November 2000 election with the powers granted by home rule, officials said. That could raise sales tax to generate funding for the project.

Forsyth Village President Robert Ritter offered to finance the committee's master report. He said that in order to raise the necessary \$14 million dollars over a 20-year period, sales tax would have to be raised by three-quarters of a cent.

Village board member Harold "Hap" Gilbert rep-

resented the site subcommittee, which is charged with finding a location for the facility. He said they have narrowed the possible sites from 19 to two, and developing the infrastructure for one of those will be much more expensive — making "site one" the economic choice.

"There's an overwhelming difference," he said. "Even if you're not a math major, you can see 'site two' is going to cost us \$14 million more."

Gilbert said he can't say where the sites are located, as the village has not secured either property.

School board member Sue Kosa reported for the design subcommittee, which has sent letters to 32 architectural firms that might handle the project. She said the field will be narrowed to 10 through the process of elimination and further reduced to five through an interview process.

The promotional subcommittee was represented by village board member Peter Ritter, who focused on finding a vendor to complete a detailed message of what home rule entails, in large part to win the support of senior citizens.

He talked of plans to have a community "cafeteria" where senior citizens could get together with the community to answer questions. Ritter also mentioned the need for signs and brochures to get the facts across.

Sue said facts are the only way to alleviate the fears of those who believe village officials might go overboard if granted the power of home rule — which takes powers normally held by the legislature and grants them to the village.

"They're going to say 'OK, we'll give you the OK to do this, but then what else are you going to do?'" Ritter said.

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