

# Jail plans back on for Okanagan Valley

Doris Janssen, CHBC News: Tuesday, December 7, 2010 2:18 PM



This conceptual drawing of a new correctional facility was released by the BC Government in 1996. Discussions are set to resume to see the jail built in the Okanagan by 2015.

**Photo Credit:** CHBC News

The BC government is once again taking a serious look at building a jail in the Okanagan Valley, a project that's been contemplated since 1996.

Talks with local governments between Enderby and Penticton, including First Nations, are expected to begin soon on planning a 360 cell corrections facility.

The most active interest has come from the Village of Lumby, east of Vernon. Mayor Kevin Acton says they've done all they can at this time and will wait for the province to return to discussions.

Solicitor General Rich Coleman confirmed the consultation process during a meeting with the BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) Monday.

"The announcement of a round of consultations is a step in the right direction," said Darryl Walker, BCGEU president. "Our union has made it clear to the government that the serious overcrowding issues in existing facilities has led to increased tension and violence against correctional officers."

On November 10 an officer was attacked by an inmate at the North Fraser Pretrial Centre. The officer is still recovering from the attack, the 30th assault on staff at that jail in the past two years, according to the BCGEU.

"It would appear that the government has heard our concerns and that we are making some progress. However, there is a long way to go yet," said Walker.

The apparently target for completion of the provincial correctional facility is 2015.