

# Contra Costa

Local • Bay Area

FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2006

## FOR DETAILS

Information about the Community Youth Center, formerly known as Concord Youth Center, can be obtained at 925-671-7070 or [www.communityyouthcenter.com](http://www.communityyouthcenter.com).

## Youth center expansion postponed

### ■ CONCORD:

Extra time given to create more programs and find alternative building plans for growing facility

By Denis Cuff  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

A Concord youth sports center is holding up its \$25 million expansion to add more coaches, attract more young athletes and look into alternative building plans.

The Community Youth Center, started by millionaire builder Ken Hofmann, announced last year it planned to add 64,000 square feet of buildings for gymnasts, boxers, ballerinas, cheerleaders, wrestlers, judo students and other young athletes.

Work might have begun as early as this year, center operators had said.

But Dennis Costanza, the center's executive director, estimated this week that the expansion would start no earlier than January 2008.

"Our board wanted us to expand our programs to offer more on weekends and evenings," he said. "This gives us time to do that."

Membership already is growing fast, increasing from 600 boys and girls a year ago to 725 now.

The center, located across from the Big C Athletic Club in Concord, draws young people from across the East Bay but primarily from central Contra Costa County.

The center has added more than a dozen classes since Jan. 1, and plans about 10 more by summertime.

Operators attribute the increase in members to high-quality coaches, low membership rates of \$20 per month, and the acceptance of boys and girls of all skill levels in activities.

The center also offers homework tutors.

Costanza said the expansion slowdown also provides time to find out if an opportunity exists to reduce expansion costs by gaining use of a building near the center.

It's possible the current building tenant will relocate, Costanza said.

The center isn't waiting to take one expansion measure: converting a storage warehouse next to the center into a taekwondo and judo area.

That project will be done this year, Costanza predicted.

The center also is trying to set up a shuttle bus service to transport students from some Concord schools directly to the center in the afternoon.

The bus service would make the center more accessible to boys and girls with working parents, especially in the low-income Monument Corridor area, center operators say.

The center has relied on word-of-mouth advertising so far, but has just hired its first public relations director,

Julie Marvel, who worked as the Golden State Warriors communications director during much of the 1990s.

"Our hiring Julie is another sign that we're very serious about expanding our programs and reaching out to serve more youth in the community," Costanza said.

The expansion needs approval from the city of Concord and the Contra Costa Airport Land Use Committee.

The airport panel has jurisdiction because the youth center is under the flight path for a Buchanan Field Airport runway.

Reach Denis Cuff at 925-943-  
67 or [dcuff@cctimes.com](mailto:dcuff@cctimes.com)