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A preview of how Giants will go  
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The Peninsula's **FREE** daily newspaper

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**SUNDAY**



**Examiner**

**SAN MATEO COUNTY**

MARCH 27, 2011

**A&E**

## Spring flowers

Gardens take over  
Union Square store

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## Casting a vote

Group chief honors  
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**KEN GARCIA**

## Power hitters

Giants now play  
role of top dog

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# Inmate influx



County could house  
400 extra prisoners  
per year as  
state considers  
transferring  
nonviolent offenders

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Cristóbal Balenciaga,  
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# LOCAL NEWS

## NEWSMAKERS

### JERRY HILL

The state assemblyman was named a California regional technology leader by TechAmerica — a national technology trade association. The honor recognizes legislators for their efforts in support of technology and job creation in the high-tech industry. California ranks first in the nation for both high-tech employment and high-tech wages, according to the organization.



### SAN BRUNO

City officials, Parkside Intermediate School students and the San Bruno Lions Club raised money for Japanese earthquake and tsunami victims Thursday by folding 1,000 origami cranes and taking donations. Japanese legend holds that anyone who folds 1,000 cranes will be granted a wish. San Bruno has had a sister city in Japan, Narita City, for more than 20 years.



EXAMINER FILE PHOTO

**Crowded:** San Mateo and San Francisco county jails could be responsible for additional low-level offenders under a state proposal.

# Jails brace for extra inmates

*Proposal would send nonviolent offenders from state to county*

By Shaun Bishop  
Examiner Staff Writer

Jails and probation departments in San Francisco and San Mateo counties could be responsible for hundreds of new low-level offenders — and potentially significant new costs — under a state plan to shift some convicts to local governments, officials said.

While the state would still incarcerate violent and high-risk offenders, Gov. Jerry Brown is proposing to send most criminals who are not sex offenders and who committed nonviolent or nonserious crimes, such as drug and property crimes, to county jails and probation departments instead of state prison and parole.

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office estimates it would obtain an extra 400 inmates per year, or about 33 per month, with few places to put them. The county's jails are rated for 843 beds but currently house about 1,000 inmates, and a new 748-bed facility to relieve overcrowding is still in the planning stages.

Based on the current cost of housing a male inmate — \$169.92 a day, or \$62,000 per year — those new inmates, expected to serve an average of about 13 months, would cost \$27 million annually.

Local officials say they support the idea of "realignment," which is intended to reduce the state's \$26 billion deficit, but the state only proposes to pay counties \$25,000

## Impacts of realignment

Officials in San Mateo and San Francisco counties estimate the governor's realignment plan will add to their workload:

### SAN MATEO COUNTY JAILS

**Now:** About 1,000 inmates, rated for 843 beds  
**Realignment prediction:** Add an estimated 33 inmates per month

### PROBATION

**Now:** Monitors 5,000 adults and 2,000 juveniles  
**Realignment prediction:** Add an additional 400 to 600 offenders

### SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY JAILS

**Now:** About 1,800 inmates, rated for 2,080 beds  
**Realignment prediction:** Unknown

### ADULT PROBATION

**Now:** Monitors 6,300 adults  
**Realignment prediction:** Add an additional 400 to 700 offenders

Sources: San Mateo County Sheriff's and adult probation offices; San Francisco Sheriff's and adult probation offices

per inmate, regardless of their sentence, Assistant Sheriff Trisha Sanchez said.

"For us, if you just do the math, we could have a significant shortfall," Sanchez said.

State officials believe the proposal provides "adequate funding" to counties, which are better able to provide substance abuse treatment and other services to keep prisoners from reoffending, said Oscar Hidalgo, spokesman for the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

"It's hopefully a win-win, where ultimately it's costing less money to keep [them] at the county level, and public safety is improving," Hidalgo said.

San Francisco Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Eileen Hirst declined to predict how many new inmates the county's four jails could expect. But significantly increasing the

2,080-bed capacity of San Francisco County's four jails would involve re-opening a 372-bed facility at the jail complex in San Bruno.

The San Mateo County Probation Department would be responsible for supervising an extra 400 to 600 low-level offenders and parolees in addition to the approximately 5,000 adults and 2,000 juveniles it currently monitors, Chief Probation Officer Stuart Forrest said.

San Francisco's Probation Department predicts it will have 400 to 700 extra adults to monitor, Chief Adult Probation Officer Wendy Still said.

San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said the state plan also requires local courts to hear parole violations, which currently are handled by the state. That could burden courts, prosecutors and defense attorneys, he said.

sbishop@sfoxaminer.com

# Burlingame considers change for business tax

By Shaun Bishop  
Examiner Staff Writer

**BURLINGAME** — The city may ask voters to raise its business license tax for the first time in more than 30 years, despite concerns that the tax is unfair and could harm struggling merchants.

The City Council agreed this week to hire a political consultant to study a potential change to the tax — \$100 annually per business — through a measure on the November ballot.

But business owners have said that the tax is unfair because large corporations pay the same as small companies. A city report showed 85 percent of the 6,384 licensed businesses have fewer than five employees.

Several council members at Monday's meeting said they agreed with the complaint.

"There's a disparity here, it's been there for a long time," Councilwoman Ann Keighran said.

Ross Bruce, president of the Broadway Merchants Association, said he is worried about the potential increase's impact.

"While we are eager to see the city in financial health, we're concerned about overburdening some of our weaker brothers and sisters in the merchant community," Bruce said.

Increasing the tax by \$100 for businesses with more than five employees would generate about \$100,000 in extra revenue, officials said. But Mayor Terry Nagel and Vice Mayor Jerry Deal noted that the city is also asking Burlingame Avenue businesses for an assessment district to fix aging sewer and water pipes, and the school district is considering a parcel tax or bond measure.

"I think it's piling on too much," Deal said.

City officials expect to hire a consultant for \$35,000 to \$40,000 to collect feedback from businesses on potential changes, finance director Jesus Nava said. He hopes to bring a report back in May.

sbishop@sfoxaminer.com