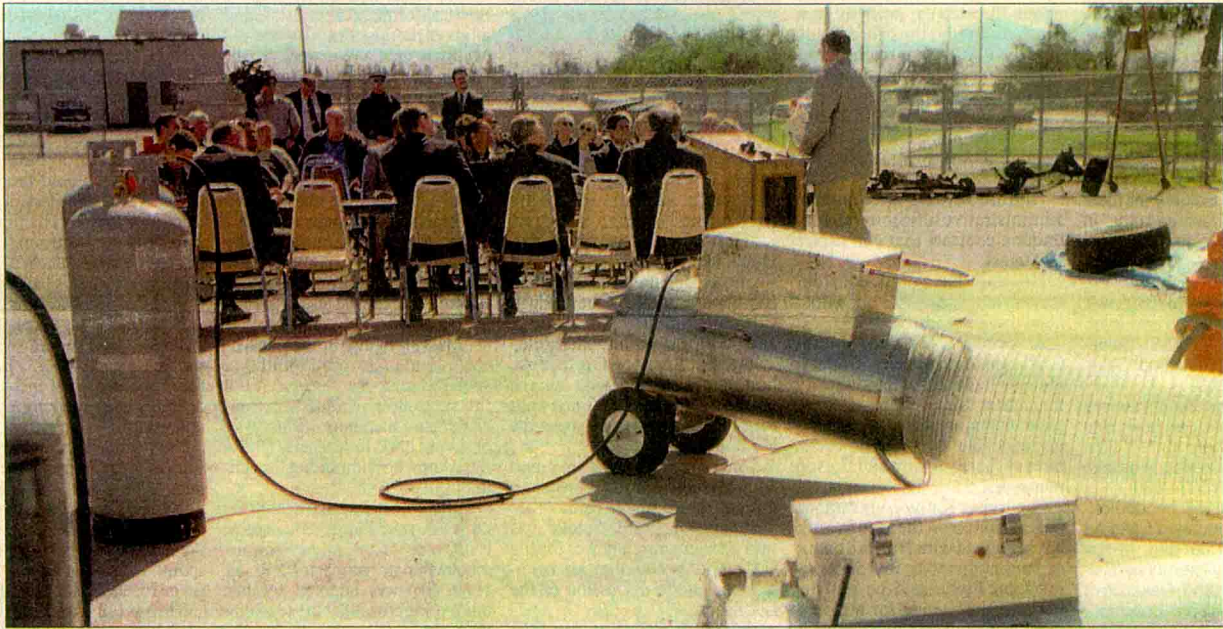


## CRISPY CRITTERS



Joe Binoya/Special to the Daily News

Schools chief Charles Weis, below, right, and Precision Works CEO David Hedman, below, left, explain the advantages of non-chemical fumigation as heat-fumigation apparatus, above, works on a building at Camarillo Airport.

### Heat-treating method aired in Camarillo

By Amy Raisin  
Staff Writer

CAMARILLO — Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Charles Weis urged school officials Wednesday to consider a toxin-free alternative to pest, bacteria and toxic mold fumigation at county schools: heat.

Backed by Assemblyman Tony Strickland, R-Camarillo, and a panel of specialists, Weis touted what he called a safer way to fumigate school buildings that takes a page from the teachings of Louis Pasteur.

"This is an opportunity to improve the health



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### Weis backs heat to drive out bugs

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of our students and teachers," Weis said, during a morning press conference in front of a tented building being heat-treated at the Camarillo Airport.

The ThermaPure system, operated by the environmental firm Precision Works Inc., is being used on one to three residential houses each day to eradicate pests, company officials said.

The company said that by using heat levels up to 150 degrees for pests such as termites and rodents, a structure — including large schools — can be purified without any chemicals at all.

"We're using simple heat," said company official David Hedman. "Insects are very vulnerable to extreme temperatures. The technology also disinfects at the same time that it kills bacteria."

Hedman said the procedure is guaranteed to rid the structure of toxic molds, bacteria and viruses for two years. The company's success rate, he said, has been 99 percent.

The technology, which has been used for more than a decade, is based on the findings of scientist Louis Pasteur and his discovery of pasteurization, based on the fact that heat kills bacteria, officials said.

Hedman said the company is offering an alternative to sulfurlyl fluoride, a commonly used fumigant.

"We want to replace pesticide fumigants," he said.

The cost is about \$1,200 to \$1,400 for a 2,500-square-foot structure. Hedman added that a competitive price would be offered to schools.

Elise Wright, a board member for the Communities and Children's Advocates Against Pesticides in Ventura County, said exploring the alternative to chemical fumigation is encouraging.

"We're delighted that they're exploring... (ways of) separating pesticides and children, who are the most vulnerable," said Wright.

"It's entirely appropriate for the schools to take responsibility for the buildings that house the children."

Aside from the absence of chemicals, Hedman and Weis mentioned other benefits of heating — a process which is completed in six to eight hours — including that it lacks an odor and doesn't require the time of traditional fumigation methods.

Strickland said he will tour the state with Hedman to promote the technique to schools.

"Parents should have peace of mind that they're sending their kids to a safe place," said Strickland.

"(The state) can help fund this if we can help convince other legislators about this technology."