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# VENTURA COUNTY STAR

## Officials turn up heat on pollutants

**EXTERMINATION:** *Pair pushes heat method to get rid of bugs and bacteria at schools.*

**By Charles Levin**  
*Staff writer*

Two elected officials endorsed a type of technology Wednesday that uses heat instead of poisonous chemicals to rid buildings of termites as well as indoor air pollutants.

Assemblyman Tony Strickland, R-Moorpark, and Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Charles Weis hailed the Therma-Pure method as a way to make schools safe from pests, toxic mold, bacteria and other viruses.

"Once you use the heat, it kills bacteria forever," Strickland said. "More people ought to know about this technology."

Strickland said he hoped lawmakers would pay for applying the technology in schools statewide with budget surplus money.

Weis likened the process, which heats buildings to between 140 and 160 degrees, to the Hippocratic Oath: "First do no harm."

"Well, this will help us do no harm," he said.

David Hedman, chief executive officer of Precision Works Inc. of Camarillo, said his patented, sauna-like heat kills termites, cockroaches and dust mites. It also disinfects buildings by killing off viruses and bacteria, such as hantavirus found in rodent droppings, he said.



Photo by Hide Terada

**IT'S HOT:** County schools chief Charles Weis checks out a heated tent method of exterminating bugs and other pollutants.

Hedman demonstrated his work at the Ventura County Schools Regional Occupation Program in Camarillo, where a crew encased the auto-shop building in a blue and yellow-striped tent. School officials chose the site because it ranks among the worst for termite infestation and bird droppings, Weis said. Roughly 30 students use the building each year.

Few of the county's 190 schools are free from pests, which are treated occasionally with chemicals, Weis said. He could not say what chemicals the schools used.

Using heat also bodes well for

portable classrooms, made from formaldehyde-laced pressed wood. The heat speeds up the time it takes for the toxic formaldehyde to "off gas," or leave the wood.

The scorching temperatures also eliminate mold, a problem in portables that promotes respiratory problems and other ailments associated with "sick" buildings, said John Conlan, a biologist and Precision Works' director of business development.

Using heat costs about the same as chemicals, said Hedman, who promised that schools would be offered a competitive rate.

Pests rarely return, but heat

fails roughly 1 percent of the time, usually because crews lack proper training in the application, Hedman said.

On Wednesday, the district got a freebie worth roughly \$1,000, Hedman said. A 2,500-square-foot home costs about \$1,200 to \$1,400 to treat, he said.

Strickland said he only showed up Wednesday to promote the technology, not Hedman's company. Strickland, who took \$1,000 in campaign contributions from Hedman, said he'd speak for any company that used heat instead of chemicals.

Hedman said he donates money to Republican and Democ-

atic politicians who support the environment. He declined to name any other politicians whose campaigns he supported.

Weis said he's never taken money from Hedman, who lives in Ojai. Like Weis, he said he pitched the technology, not the company.

Hedman licenses his patented heat process to 20 other companies in California and to Terminix nationwide. Those companies can compete against Hedman for jobs. Hedman said he still profits from competitors' work because he owns the patent.

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