

# VOICES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2008

## OUR OPINION

# The value of inaction

## State reconsidering Greystone land sale

The State House Commission's inaction on Monday was a good thing for Morris County. The commission, which oversees the sale of state property, had before it a plan to sell about 130 excess acres on the grounds of Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital. It took no action, presumably because of a large contingent of Morris County lawmakers and residents opposed to the idea. The commission will consider the idea again in March.

When plans were announced under the administration of Gov. Christie Whitman to close the old Greystone and build a modern hospital, it was understood that a new building would not consume a

### OurView:

Morris may have to spend some money.

sprawling 700-acre campus. The state used part of the site for the new hospital and "sold" about 300 acres to the county for the proverbial \$1 for recreation. Some 130 acres remains.

Morris lawmakers cite legislation mandating that the remaining 130 acres be kept undeveloped. The State House Commission ignored those laws earlier this year in agreeing to sell the land, presumably for development. The resulting outcry from Morris warranted the second look on Monday.

The state's interest in selling the property is understandable. Still, we don't think more development in and around Greystone would be beneficial. But we're afraid Morris County officials may have to resign themselves to buying the land from the state, or at least agreeing to handle any environmental cleanups.

In the original transaction, the county may have gotten 300 acres for just about nothing, but it has spent millions in remediation. The same scenario may need to be repeated. We don't see the cash-strapped state being willing to just keep the land undeveloped indefinitely.