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## Just the Facts<sup>©</sup>

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**www.justthefacts.net**

### Cold weather brings special concerns for students, school

Preparation is key to successful plan

*Editor's Note: This article, based on an interview with Hoopeston Area Superintendent Mark Conolly, bears reprinting in light of current winter conditions.*

The start of the holiday season means a potential for winter storms and the possibility for school closings.

Winter presents a unique set of challenges, said Superintendent. Mark Conolly. A storm may prompt closing of school during the day and students—and parents—should be prepared.

Conolly suggested parents make sure their children are dressed warmly in case they must walk home from school and that families develop a contingency plan should school be dismissed while parents are at work. Conolly suggested the plan might include a secondary place for children to go should they be unable to get into their homes in case of an early dismissal. "Our fear is not the child who is on the bus and warm but the one who has to walk across town who might find no one at home," he said.

Weather-related closings during the school day take at least one hour of preparation time, Conolly said. In that time, police departments are notified, as are local factories and radio and television stations, all before children are dismissed.

Days in which school is cancelled before school starts are no less active. Conolly and transportation director Darrell Brown often travel country roads to determine whether it is safe to bus the approximately 40 percent of students who need transportation to school.

Input is also sought from Grant Township Road Commissioner Gary Weinard and those bus drivers who live in rural areas. However, there is not a set formula for closing school. "There are no definitive criteria," Conolly said. "We do the best we can with the information

we have available."

Once the decision has been made to cancel classes, calls again go out to police, factories and media, including WHPO, WIAI, WITY and WGFA radio stations and television stations WICD, Channel 15 and WCIA Channel 3. Conolly said he tries to make his decision before 6 a.m. so it may be broadcast on news programs.

While many things go into deciding if school should be closed, some things do not. Each district is allowed five snow days annually. Days missed during the year must be made up at the end of the year "but that never comes into play when you're considering a safety issue," Conolly said.

Missed state aid for closing school is also not considered, simply because it is not an issue, he said. The amount received for state aid is not based on day-to-day attendance but on the three best months of attendance,

**See WEATHER on other side**

### Police News



Patricia L. Benison, 32, of 528 N. Fourth St., turned herself in to police at 2:25 p.m. Thursday.

Benison, wanted on a Ford County warrant, was released on \$300 cash bond.

Stacy J. Vacari, 36, of 709 S. Market was arrested at 7:03 p.m. Friday in the 300 block of South Market.

She was charged with disorderly conduct on a complaint from a 17-year-old Hoopeston man who alleged Vacari had an altercation with him.

She was released on a notice to appear.

A board member of the Vermilion Iron Little League field reported Saturday that someone damaged a window casing at the field.

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## Court Dispositions



### November 2

**Mary J. Martinez**, Hoopeston, status hearing; new status hearing December 7.

**Rocky D. Walker**, Hoopeston, failed to appear for status hearing; notice to be sent.

**Donald Underwood**, Hoopeston, status hearing; given 50 hours public service work.

**Eddie D. Hargrove**, Hoopeston, pleaded not guilty to nuisance vehicle; fined \$180.

**Keith A. Whorrall**, Hoopeston, failed to appear at trial, guilty by default; sentencing December 7.

### November 16

**Crystal H. Cavazos**, Watseka, pleaded not guilty to possession of drug paraphernalia; trial December 21.

**Edward A. Houser**, Hoopeston, pleaded not guilty to disorderly conduct; trial December 7.

**Rhonda G. Schramm**, Danville, pleaded guilty to possession of cannabis; fined \$230.

**Shellia S. Haton**, Hoopeston, found guilty by default for failure to appear at initial appearance for nuisance vehicle; sentencing Jan. 18, 2007.

**Scott A. Sheppard**, Paxton, found guilty by default for failure to appear at initial appearance for disorderly conduct; sentencing Jan. 4, 2007.

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## Briefly

### WMD winners

November winners in the Women Making a Difference drawing are: \$25, Edna Nern and Jane Willard; \$15, Donna Crose and Frank Smith; and \$10, Betty McClure and Leslie Shore

### Food for Fines

Now is the time to return that overdue item and help

your community at the same time. Hoopeston Public Library will accept items for the Grant Township Food Cupboard during December. Personal care products, nonperishable food and paper products will be accepted and will count towards payment of overdue fines.

### Meetings

Hoopeston City Council, 7 p.m. Tuesday, city hall

## Obituaries

**LEVERENZ** - Ruth Leverenz, 94, of Milford, died December 1, 2006 in Hoopeston. The family received friends from noon-2 p.m. Sunday at the United Methodist Church in Wellington, followed by a service at the church at 2 p.m. Burial will be in the family plot at Sugar Creek Cemetery, Stockland. Memorials are suggested to the Wellington United Methodist Church. Anderson Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

**RECKNER** - Roger Glen "Pa" Reckner, 82, of Hoopeston, died at 12:25 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30, 2006, at Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital. Funeral service will be at 2 p.m. Monday at Anderson Funeral Home, Hoopeston. Burial will be in Floral Hill Cemetery.

## Weather continued from other side

traditionally September, October and November.

There are always some more adversely affected by bad weather. "We always have at least one person whose lane has drifted closed," Conolly said. Then it is the parent's call. "If they feel because of weather conditions that it's a more judicious decision to keep their child at home then by all means, they should keep their child home," he said.

tery with military rites by Hoopeston American Legion and VFW posts. Visitation will be noon-2 p.m. Monday at the funeral home. Memorials are suggested to Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital or Hoopeston Community Memorial Nursing Home.

**REIFEL** - Duane C. Reifel, 66, of Milford died Friday, Dec. 1, 2006 at Iroquois Memorial Hospital, Watseka. Funeral service will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday at St. Edmund's Catholic Church, Watseka. Burial will be in Sugar Creek Cemetery, Stockland. Visitation will be 4-8 p.m. Monday at Knapp Funeral Home, Milford. Memorials are suggested to Milford Athletic Boosters or Clifford Bury Auditorium, Stockland.



## Weather



Partly cloudy today, tonight and tomorrow. High today 28, low 18. Tomorrow, high 35, low 23.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

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