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Senior Citizens & Ladies Day
 Now save **\$7 off** your oil change at
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 Rtes. 1 & 9, Hoopeston 283-5373
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 This week's Specials
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 3 pc. Chicken meal w/drink \$4.99
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Email: publish@justthefacts.net Phone/Fax (217) 283-9348
 Lourdine Florek, owner
Just the Facts®
 Tuesday, August 13, 2013
 Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication
 P.O. Box 441, Hoopeston, IL. 60942 www.justthefacts.net

Briefly

Clothing memorabilia sought

Hoopeston Area CUSD #11 is seeking old clothing memorabilia for display purposes throughout the district.

Hoopeston Area is interested in extracurricular memorabilia from Hoopeston, Cheneyville, East Lynn, Wellington, Rankin and Rossville.

Please contact Curt Spaur for any questions at (217) 283-6667 or the district office, 283-6668.

Gospel Music in the Park

Gospel Music in the Park will be held from 6-8

p.m. Saturday at Rossville's Christman Park.

The Allen Quartet, featuring Keith Allen with sons Chad, Gordon, Daniel and daughter-in-law, Brooke, of East Lynn, will perform along with Cruse Brothers of Tangier, Ind.

Bring a friend and lawn chairs and enjoy the music. In case of rain, the event will be moved to a dry location. A free will offering will be taken.

Police News

Joseph Rocco Martinico, 43, of Washington, was arrested after police received a complaint at 6:10 p.m. Saturday. A 39-year-old Hoopeston woman alleged that Martinico caused several hundred dollars of damage in the 200 block of East Main.

He was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville to await arraignment.

Weather

Mostly sunny today. High 78. Tonight, mostly clear. Low 52. Tomorrow, sunny. High 75, low 51.

Hoopeston American Legion
 502 E. Penn
 presents
The Southern Transfer Band
 Saturday, Aug. 17 8:30-midnight
 Open to the public - No cover charge

HUBBARD TRAIL COUNTRY CLUB
TUESDAYS 5-8PM - Homemade Chips & Salsa, Tacos, Enchiladas, Quesadillas, Nachos
FRIDAYS 5-9PM - Fish, Shrimp, Grilled Tilapia, Grilled Chicken, Chuck Burgers
LUNCH Wednesdays-Thursdays 11-1: Burgers, Grilled Chicken, Grilled Tenderloins


 All proceeds to benefit the
Hoopeston Fire Department
 For fire gear lost during our recent fire
 Bring in this coupon on your first exam to receive your discount.
\$20 FIRST EXAM DONATION Your first visit includes Consultation and Exam
217-283-5638
 (Offer good through August 31, 2013)

ROBINSON CHIROPRACTIC
 of Hoopeston
 Call Today 217-283-5638 to set up an appointment
 Find us at 830 S. Dixie Hwy. Hoopeston, IL 60942

Unanswered questions should be resolved before Hoopeston takes on ownership of Vermilion Iron, increases sales tax

Editor’s note: Admit it - you know you missed me. People ask me all the time when I’m going to write something but Lourdine guards the computer like it’s the Holy Grail or something. She’s doing other things today, so here I am.

Here’s a little civics lesson for those of you who don’t get that in school anymore or for those who may have forgotten: governments (be they federal, state or local) have no money of their own. The only money they have is what they take from citizens’ wallets in the form of taxes.

Government paying for things often has unintended consequences. We’ve all seen that at the federal and state levels. I hope it doesn’t become evident at the local level, too.

I’m talking about two issues brought up at last week’s gathering of the Hoopeston City Council where 1.) various people spoke about the need for the city to take possession of the former Vermilion Iron site to facilitate cleaning it up and 2.) the possibility of increasing Hoopeston’s sales tax one half of one percent to clean up dilapidated residential and commercial property. Both are expected to be discussed at tonight’s council meeting.

Let’s start with #1, shall we?
Researching cleaning up potentially contaminated sites, I have more questions than I had before. The only thing I’m pretty sure of is that one way or the other, tax dollars will be used and that stinks.

It stinks because the last Big Cheese to control Vermilion Iron is seemingly untouchable, standing behind a now-defunct corporation, one in a string of such corporations. By sheltering assets in these corporations, Big Cheese is able to keep his 25-lot spread in a Chicago suburb.

You almost have to feel sorry for Big Cheese because the value of his home, (which appears to also be sheltered) has fallen from more than \$900,000 to just over \$800,000 in the last few years. The loss probably makes it harder for him to keep up that winter home in the Florida Keys.

Big Cheese should clean up any mess at Vermilion Iron but because the corporation was dissolved, someone else will probably have to do it. Representatives of some groups think Hoopeston should, and do it before a tax sale scheduled for August 19. I say, what’s the hurry?

I learned at last week’s meeting that soil samples that will determine the extent of any contamination have not

yet been taken. Will the samples show minimal contamination or levels that would qualify it for Superfund status? That’s something officials should know before a decision is made because it will affect cleanup costs.

Is there legal action that can be taken against not only the most recent owner but those who previously operated the foundry? Has anyone contacted the Illinois Attorney General’s office to see if it can help in this area? Has anyone talked to a lawyer specializing in environmental law to see what options are open to Hoopeston?

If Hoopeston takes ownership, does Hoopeston have to pay to clean the site? EPA information is not clear. At www.epa.state.il.us/land/brownfields/faq.html, in a section on whether local governments can be held liable for cleanup costs, says yes, they may; “however it would be rare for a local government to be held liable if the local government simply acquires a brownfield property for purposes of cleaning it up.”

I’d like to point out that “rare” does not mean “never.”

At the same link, the question is asked: “If I want to clean up and redevelop a contaminated piece of property, do I need to be concerned about potential liability?”

The answer: “Yes. Before getting involved with a development project that includes property with possible environmental contamination, municipalities should familiarize themselves with the relevant state and federal liability laws and regulations. Liability for a contaminated piece of property can be a serious concern in some circumstances.”

As for financing cleanup, the site states: “A variety of funding sources can be used by local governments for brownfield redevelopment. These can include grants, loans, bonds, taxes and fees, and private funds. While only a few programs are specially designed for brownfields, many traditional economic development tools can be used to support brownfield projects.”



The EPA has grants for many projects. Hoopeston hoped to get one to refurbish the water storage tanks but was denied. Instead, Hoopeston got a low interest EPA loan and raised water rates to repay the loan.

Let’s assume Hoopeston has to take out a loan for at least part of the cleanup costs, which could

run into multiple millions of dollars. Should residents, many of whom are finding it harder to make ends meet, have to shoulder this burden? How much more will we have to pay to clean up a mess caused by someone else? Will any of the groups pushing for the city to take ownership be willing to share in any financial burden and how much are they willing to pony up?

In a worst-case scenario, could this bankrupt Hoopeston?

Whether Hoopeston takes ownership of this property - or most any property, should be an act of last resort, to be done after all questions and concerns are addressed.

Moving on to #2, the issue of raising the sales tax to remediate dilapidated residential and commercial property was also brought up last week.

Mayor Bill Crusinberry said the amount is a quarter on a \$50 fill up at the pump, which isn’t much if you don’t drive much but residents who drive to jobs in Danville, Champaign and Lafayette will find those quarters adding up over the course of a year. How will an increase affect sales of big ticket items, like a new car?

Why should those of us who maintain our property pay for those who don’t? The unintended consequence of such a tax is that it takes away personal responsibility and may encourage more people to let their property go to Hades because “why not? The government will pay to clean it up.”

At the mayoral forum prior to his reelection, Crusinberry floated the idea of an increased sales tax, saying he wanted to put the idea on the ballot so voters could choose what they were willing to pay for. What happened to letting residents decide?

I certainly don’t want to see Hoopeston dotted with

more and more junk properties but I think other avenues need to be pursued to fix that.

For example, if property owners are cited under ordinances and fined appropriately and the city uses the state’s debt recovery program that it recently joined, maybe things can get cleanup up without cleaning out taxpayers’ wallets.

Letters to the Editor

Nursing home adds much quality to life

I want to publicly thank the staff at of our new Hoopeston Heritage Nursing Home. I have ministered in many nursing homes and few come close to the friendly, helpful level of service we enjoy here in Hoopeston.

I appreciate Harry Brockus and the Hospital Board for securing funds to build this new facility. The residents enjoy a higher quality of life with more beautiful surroundings and better privacy than before. I'm thankful we found a way to honor our older generation and guarantee such improvements help us retain the kind of people Hoopeston needs the most.

Stop by and pay these dear people a visit. Share a smile and a story. You will walk away with a heart full of love and joy.

Sincerely for Christ,
Pastor Adam Taubert
First Baptist Church of Hoopeston

Classifieds

HELP WANTED

Part time maintenance person needed 1 day per week at Autumn Fields. Apply in person between 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

LOST & FOUND

Lost: Male black lab, “Cole.” Has white stripe from mid neck to belly, wearing orange collar. Last seen in Antioch Rd. area. (217) 339-2328.

MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

LG 55" LCD HD TV, 1080P, 120HZ, Used 7 months. \$800. Call (217) 283-7568. Good condition!

Two burial plots at Floral Hill Cemetery, close to fish pond \$500. 217-504-4919