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Lourdine Osborne
editor

just the facts

Friday, July 8, 1994

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication!
(217) 283-9348 P.O. Box 441, Hoopeston, IL. 60942

Susan Comstock
ad manager

Stokely kicks off what may be last corn season

What may be the beginning of the end for corn canning in Hoopeston started Thursday at Hoopeston's Stokely USA plant.

The first day of the corn pack was "not bad," said plant manager Bill Nicholls. "The first day is always kind of tough because you have to train people and they have to learn where they are supposed to go," he said. "You start from nothing and you take off full-blast."

Approximately 275 people are expected to produce 800,000 cases of corn this year. Two production shifts and a cleaning shift are currently scheduled at the plant.

The number of employees and cases is about the same as last year, but down significantly from earlier years. "That's probably half of what we used to do," Nicholls said.

Although many of the faces at the Stokely plant are familiar ones from seasons gone by, a few newer people - both migrant workers and locals - are manning the corn lines.

Nicholls said some long-time employees either found full time work, went to school or just did not want to work the pack this year.

Corn currently being processed came from contract farmers in Missouri. Approximately 3,800 acres of locally-grown corn is not expected to be

ripe for another week.

This season may end a 115-year corn-canning tradition in Hoopeston.

Officials at Stokely's corporate offices in Oconomowoc, Wis., had said last year would be the last for corn pack.

However, floods in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin cut Stokely inventory severely, keeping corn pack in Hoopeston.

Whether the decision about this year will stand remains to be seen.

"Nothing's been said at this point," Nicholls said. "I'm sure they'll wait until their canning season is done in Wisconsin."

Things have not been the same at the plant since a 1992 boiler explosion and subsequent fire destroyed most of the plant's corn processing

facilities, Nicholls said.

After the fire, the company installed high-speed processing lines. "As far as corn plants go in the U.S., we're probably up with the best of them," Nicholls said.

Installing high-tech equipment did not stop the company from announcing the end of corn pack, however.

Still, Nicholls remains hopeful that perhaps corn processing and the jobs it provides will remain. "I'm hoping this won't be the last year," he said. "I hope we'll be around next year."

Stokely to provide corn for Sweet Corn Festival

He doesn't know where it will come from, but Bill Nicholls said Stokely will provide sweet corn for the 51st annual Sweetcorn Festival during Labor Day weekend.

The company provides 45 to 50 tons of corn for the event.

Nicholls said corn will be brought in from another Stokely plant because of the difficulty predicting when local corn would mature. "It could be ready on time," he said, "but then, it might be late."

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Entries sought for 51st Sweetcorn Festival parade

It wouldn't be a Sweet Corn Festival without the annual parade.

The Hoopeston Jaycess, organizers of the festival, are seeking parade entries for this year's event.

Floats will be divided into categories, including civic, commercial, church, antique auto, horse and rider, horse and cart, political and "just an entry."

Entrants will receive parade information two to three weeks before the event.

Information on purchasing floats or float materials is available on request.

For more information, call Gilbert Warner.

(217) 283-9368; Mary Rush, (217) 283-7108; or Leon Polson, (217) 283-5515.

The grand parade, with the theme "CONFIDENTIALLY. We're Still Here and Still Growing Strong," will step out at 10:30 a.m. Sept. 3.

Police News



William J. Schloot, 18, of 524 S. Market, was arrested Wednesday on a charge of criminal damage to property after he allegedly broke the door at Price Less Food Store, 317 S. Market. He was released on a notice to appear.

Steve Long, 715 E. Washington, reported Thursday that three people ran through his yard, damaging six carriage lights near his driveway.

Tom Galloway, 801 E. Washington, reported that someone took two wooden reindeer from his yard. Galloway is offering a \$100 reward for the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the theft.

In the hospital



Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital

July 5, 1994

Admitted: Richard Swope, Hoopeston.

Discharged: none.

July 6, 1994

Admitted: Tyler Robling, Rossville.

Discharged: none.

Weather



Partly sunny, warm and humid today, with a 50 percent chance of storms. High near 90. Tonight, continued rainy. Low in the low to mid 70s. Tomorrow, scattered strong storms. High near 85. Low near 72. Sunday, partly cloudy. High near 85. Low near 65.



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Ha Ha Ha Ha



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