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Tuesday, July 23, 1996
Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication!

Hoopeston's top cop plans to hang up holster next year

Police chief Orval Kaag will hang up his holster next year, but unlike those who plan to travel or fish during their retirement, Kaag hopes to find another job.

Kaag learned earlier this year that he is seven quarters short of drawing Social Security, and Medicare to provide health insurance coverage.

"After 35 years, I've got to find another job," he said. "I couldn't see myself out there looking for a job at 58, but that's what I'm going to do."

Kaag said he needs 40 quarters with payments to Social Security, but only has 33. The knowledge that he needed extra time came as a shock.

Kaag had paid into Social Security through his military career and while employed at American Can prior to becoming an officer. During his law enforcement career, Kaag often had part time jobs, all paying into the system.

"I thought I had enough," he said. "Obviously, I didn't."

Kaag has not set a retirement date yet, saying it will be sometime after his November work

anniversary. "If I don't get a job, it may be next summer," he said.

Kaag joined the force on Oct. 16, 1961, fulfilling a boyhood dream.

Kaag credits two men with his interest in police work. First, an uncle, Roscoe Fawver, was police chief from 1942-50. "I was fascinated with him when I was a little kid," he said.

The second was Gene Yates, of the Illinois State Police. "I had a lot of respect for him," Kaag said.

Kaag's original goal was to follow in Yates' footsteps as a state trooper, "but you had to be 5'9" and I was only 5'8"," he said.

Three years after joining the department, Kaag was named acting chief. In January 1965, he was named chief.

Kaag has worked with five mayors during his tenure. A disagreement with a former mayor, Earl Smock, resulted in Kaag quitting his job - for 33 days.

Kaag said he and Smock disagreed about a jail inspector's report which said jail conditions were

Hoopeston Area sets school registration times for 1996-97

Aug. 12-15 has been set as registration dates at Hoopeston Area schools.

Monday, Aug. 12, ninth graders and Maple Grade School students will register, followed on Tuesday, Aug. 13 with tenth graders and John Greer students.

Seventh grade orientation will also be Aug. 13, at 6:30 p.m. in the middle school auditorium.

Seventh, eleventh and Honeywell students will register Wednesday, Aug. 15, while students in grades 8 and 12 will register Thursday, Aug. 15.

Orientation for incoming freshmen will be at 6:30

p.m. Thursday, Aug. 8 in the high school auditorium.

The first attendance day for students will be Tuesday, Aug. 20. Classes will begin at 8:20 a.m., with dismissal at 11:05 a.m. for grade schools and 11:20 p.m. for the middle and high schools.

Wednesday, Aug. 21 through Friday, Aug. 30 will be early dismissal days with grade school students dismissed at 2:05 p.m. and middle and high school students dismissed at 2:20.

Students will begin all-day schedules on Tuesday, Sept. 3.

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unsafe. "He said I should ignore it and lock people
See COP on other side

Cop continued from other side

up," Kaag said. "I said I wouldn't. I tore my badge off my chest and threw it on the desk and walked out. I got excited in those days. I've mellowed since then."

That is why Kaag, who was originally hired in October, will not have 35 years in until November. "I have to make up those 33 days," he said.

Aside from the 33-day hiatus, Kaag has only missed 4 illness-related days of work during his career. "I've been blessed with good health," he said.

After the uproar, Kaag, whose work had been overseen by the mayor, was put under the local police commission.

During his career, Kaag has learned the good and bad of police work. The good is "working with the good people, and there are a lot of them out there."

Another benefit has been working with other officers. "Police officers are the best people I've ever met," he said. "There'd be a lot of people who would dispute that, but they've never worked with them as police officers."

On the down side, Kaag cited frustration as a problem. "It's always been frustrating, but not like it is now," he said. "The jails weren't full. They actually sent someone to jail."

Another bad thing has been serving in a small town and having to "arrest people you know well," he said.

Throughout his career, Kaag has survived with no

major injuries. "I was lucky to get through my career without getting shot or injured," he said, adding he has only fired his weapon once, during a roadblock situation. "I was trying to shoot out the tires," he said.

Kaag is pleased that, despite 35 years in police work, his life has retained some degree of normalcy. "Thirty five years is sufficient, I think," he said. "To come out of (police work) without ulcers and having your sanity is

Several officers interested in job

City officials have not been officially notified of Police Chief Orval Kaag's retirement, but several officers are lobbying for the job.

"All but a couple patrolmen have made statements that they were interested in applying," said Mayor Bob Ault.

One officer outside the department has also expressed interest in the job, he said.

Kaag, who plans to retire next year, has not put the decision in writing. "Orval told me verbally that he's going to retire and said he'd give me plenty of written notice," Ault said.

A change in chiefs may mean a change in who the chief reports to.

The chief, as well as the officers, are under the Hoopeston Police Commission. Hoopeston is the only local community where the chief does not report to the mayor, said Tom Sheridan, commission secretary.

Ault said such a change would have to be approved by the city council. "I haven't discussed it with them," he added.

Police News

Andy Braden of 815 W. Penn, reported Monday that someone took a cellular phone and adapter from his 1991 Chevrolet pickup truck.

Weather

Mostly sunny today. High in the mid 80s. Tonight, slight chance of rain. Low in the mid 60s. Tomorrow, isolated thunderstorms. High near 85, low near 65.

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