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V-MEG, local police make biggest cocaine bust in county history

Drug enforcement officials are calling a Wednesday morning drug bust the biggest in Vermilion County history.

Three people were arrested in Hoopeston after law enforcement officials seized approximately 17 ounces of cocaine, with a street value estimated at \$138,000.

Rosaleo Ayala, 21, Nabor Lara, 39, and Estrella Esponia, 39, all of Chicago, were charged with conspiracy to deliver cocaine and possession with intent to deliver more than 400 grams but less than 900 grams of cocaine.

The three were being held in the Public Safety Building in Danville.

The charges are Class X felonies and carry a possible sentence of 12 to 50 years imprisonment.

Agents from the Vermilion Metropolitan Enforcement Group, as well as Hoopeston police, Vermilion County Sheriff's Department K-9 unit and Illinois State Police Criminal Conspiracy Task Force took part in the raid and arrests.

VMEG is a multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement group comprised of the Vermilion County Sheriff's Department, Danville Police Department and Illinois

Rankin residents raise stink over proposed pig farm

RANKIN—A sow-breeding operation wanting to locate in Rankin has residents there believing they're being sold a pig in a poke.

Approximately 100 residents met Monday night with officials of Heartland Pork Enterprises, which hopes to build a 3,200-sow farm approximately two miles southwest of Rankin.

Questions voiced during the meeting centered on how the company will dispose of dead animals and animal waste and whether the operation will affect the aquifer used by the town, said Lisa Austin, one of the residents who attended the meeting.

Jeff Penczek, Heartland's general manager of production for Illinois and Indiana operations, and Brian Martin, project manager for Quality Ag Builders, the construction part of Heartland Pork, answered questions "but not to our satisfaction," Austin said.

For Austin, what the operation could do to the Mahomet Aquifer is a big concern.

The aquifer supplies Rankin with water, Austin

said.

Austin said someone in the crowd asked if Heartland had ever had an accident in Illinois and that company officials said a "minor accident" occurred in Pleasant Hills. "It wasn't a minor accident," Austin said. "It was 25,000 gallons of raw hog waste. I bet it wasn't a pleasant hill anymore."

Austin, whose husband, Michael, is a trustee in Rankin, said the hog farm could also devalue property in the community. "The minute they're allowed to go up, our property values are going to go down," she said.

Odor is another concern if the site is constructed on the proposed site, 2 miles south of the village and 1½ miles west of Route 49. "Eighty percent of the time, the wind blows from that direction," Austin said. "The smell will come right into town."

The way the company has gone about planning its operation has also come under fire. "To me, they

See PIG on other side

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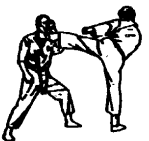
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Police News

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Corinne A. Bunetto, 730 E. Main St., reported Wednesday that someone threw a large piece of cement through the windshield of her 1982 Buick was it was parked on the street at her home.

April Howie, Parkview Court #48, reported Wednesday that someone took a dash-mounted CD player from her 1993 Ford. Howie reported that the vehicle was locked at the time.

No tickets or injuries were reported in an accident at 12:29 .m. Wednesday at East Thompson and North Fifth St.

Police said Roberta L. Fink, route 1, Potomac, was southbound on Fifth St. in a 1995 Ford when she struck a 1984 Chevrolet driven by Darrell L. Estes, 109 E. Fredrick, Milford, who was eastbound on Thompson.

Pig continued from other side

slithered in here at night," Austin said. "The only reason the town found out about it was somebody from the community stopped and asked what they were doing," she said.

Residents are doing what they can to keep the new neighbors from moving in. Petitions to keep the company out are being circulated and resolutions against the plan are expected to be introduced before the village and township boards, as well as the Vermilion County board.

Although residents are fighting the company coming, the state has not given approval for Heartland to open. The firm is designing a lagoon system to hold animal waste. According to reports, that design and permit application will be submitted to the state within the next 10 days. It will take approximately 30 days for officials to act on the request.

Also, company officials have not made a final decision to locate near Rankin, according to reports.

Heartland decided against opening a hog operation near Veedersburg, Ind., when residents there opposed the plan.

Heartland Pork Enterprises is headquartered in Alden, Iowa.


According to an October 1996 article, the company focuses on Cotswold breeding stock, with operations in Nebraska, Illinois and Iowa.

The company was rated 13th in a Successful Farming list of "Pork Powerhouses" in the article, with 36,400

Obituaries

WOLFE - Homer M. Wolfe, 80, of Danville, formerly of Rossville, died at 6:55 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 4, 1997, at United Samaritans Medical Center, Logan campus, Danville. Funeral services will be at 2:30 p.m. Saturday at the Wolfe Funeral Home in Rossville. Burial will be in Mann's Chapel Cemetery. Visitation will be one hour before services at the funeral home.

Thursday Trivia




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between 8 and 8:30 a.m. today to win!
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Today's question: **What animal will be celebrated this year for Chinese New Year?**
 Last winner: **Dovey Cleveland**
 Last answer: **Rudolph Valentino took his name from St. Valentine's Day.**


In the hospital



Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital
Feb. 4, 1997

Admitted: none.
Discharged: Fred Schuler, Hoopeston.

Weather




Mostly sunny today. High in the low 40s. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low in the mid 20s. Tomorrow, partly cloudy, colder. High near 34, low near 22.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice: All UPIU 7985 members - run-off election for president and machine shop day steward will be held from 2:45-5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 7 at the Hoopeston VFW.

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