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Principal praises district, majority of high school students

Most Hoopeston Area High School students are good young people, busily involved with school activities and work, according to the school principal.

Mark Conolly, Hoopeston Area High School principal for the past seven years, spoke at Monday's Neighborhood Watch meeting.

"We have very few major problems with the kids who attend the high school," Conolly said.

Like previous generations, the current group of youngsters is finding its way toward adulthood. "In my day, it was the Beatles and mop-top hair cuts," he said. "My parents looked at that and thought it was the end of civilized society. Now it's grunge and baggy clothes. We survived and they'll survive. It's all part of adolescence. It's all part of growing up."

Part of the reason the school has few major problems is because of structured environment and monitoring by teachers.

Conolly explained that students are kept busy throughout the day and have little time to cause problems. He said incoming freshmen next year will have 94 course selections to choose from, as well as many extra-curricular activities. "It's not a bare-bones system," he said. "If there's a student who's not


involved in school, it's not for lack of programs but because he doesn't want to be."

Besides keeping students active, teachers monitor students between classes, as well as before and after school and during lunch hours. "We cut down on the amount of opportunity," he said. "We do that pretty efficiently, I think."

Conolly praised not only the students, but the administration, for keeping up with technology and for maintaining attractive buildings. "If you drive up to a school and there's graffiti on the walls and weeds growing, it probably sets a tone for what's going on inside," he said. "If you drive up and the building is painted and the grass is mowed, that sets a tone for what's going on inside, too."

Further praise was given to the auxiliary police who attend games and other events. "I tip my hat to them," Conolly said. "I have people ask me (when they see auxiliary officers) if we have problems and I say no, and that's why we don't have problems. They provide a valuable service for us and we're very appreciative of it."

One societal and one economic problem face Hoopeston Area, as well as other districts, Conolly said.



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Police News



Two 22-year-olds were arrested at 12:59 a.m. Tuesday in the 300 block of Front St.

Juan Torres Jr., of Ambia, Ind., was arrested on a Vermilion County traffic warrant for failure to appear and was charged with no valid driver’s license. He was taken to the Public Safety Building in lieu of bond.

Jose R. Barron, 421 E. Thompson, was charged with interfering with a police officer during Torres’ arrest. He was released on \$100 cash bond.

A car stolen from Iroquois County was recovered on Conservation Club Road.

Police were sent to the vicinity of East Thompson Ave. and Conservation Club Road regarding three suspicious people walking southbound from Iroquois County.

“One of the things we can’t be, but people want us to

See PRAISE on other side

Praise continued from other side

be is all things to all people,” he said. “People look to the school system to take up the slack. We do the best we can but we can’t do it all. We need parental support. We need community support.”

On the economic side, maintaining financial stability through stable enrollment is the key to the district’s continued good health.

One area that may be a stress on economic stability is keeping up with technological changes. “We’ve kept pace, but it’s extremely scary what’s going on down the road,” Conolly said. “I don’t know how school districts, or our district, will be able to keep pace five years down the road. Our best computer minds in the system will admit that they can’t keep up with it.”

Technology is one area that will allow the community to interact more with the school, Conolly said, reminding the audience that the high school’s computer lab is open to the public for the next nine Monday nights. “It’s one way the school can extend itself to the community and get people in who don’t normally come in,” he said.

Conolly also briefly explained laws governing schools, concerning searches for drugs.

Lockers and cars in the parking lot may be searched with reasonable cause, “basic suspicion,” he said. Reasonable cause is a lower level of causation than probable cause needed by police, he said.

Conolly and Mayor Bob Ault, who hosted the meeting, said the school is an important drawing card in attracting new residents and business to Hoopeston. “That’s one of the first things people want to know about,” Ault said.

Ault said he would like to get students involved with the Neighborhood Watch program. “They can be our

In the hospital



Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital
March 24, 1997

Admitted: Lester Vines and Gertrude Yarno, Hoopeston.

Discharged: Harrison Wheeler and E. Geraldine Burton, Hoopeston.

Weather



Mostly sunny today. High in the mid to upper 50s. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low in the upper 30s. Tomorrow, partly sunny. High near 62, low near 43.

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