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Tips listed to prepare for potential Y2K problems

Editor's note: This is the second in a two-part series on Y2K. Today's segment deals with a checklist of preparations for potential problems.

Governments and businesses have spent billions of dollars to ensure that computer systems will make a successful transition to the next century. Although it is unlikely that the Year 2000, or Y2K, issue will create significant problems in the United States, no one can say for sure that there won't be temporary disruptions in some services. Such interruptions are expected to be short-lived, like temporary problems in service caused by storms, and while inconvenient, are not expected to cause long-term problems. The following recommendations will help you and your neighbors prepare for any difficulties that may occur:

Food, Water and Other Suppliers:

Prepare as you would for a long holiday weekend by having at least a three-day supply of food and water (one gallon per person per day). The food industry is not only ready for Y2K, but it is resilient and accustomed to dealing with unexpected disruptions (e.g., storms). As always, it is a good idea to make purchases early.

Make a personal assessment of items and services that are critical to your family, including special items or services required by family members with special needs, such as infants, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Make sure that you have adequate clothing, tools and supplies, flashlights, batteries, a battery-powered radio and a first aid kit, as recommended by FEMA and the American Red Cross. For further information, visit: <http://www.fema.gov/pte/empred.htm> and <http://www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/emered.html>, or call FEMA at 1-800-480-2520.

Follow all appropriate safety instructions for fuel storage and use of heating and cooking devices or other

emergency items.

Important Records: Keep copies of important records — particularly your bank and financial statements, medical records and prescription drug information — in the few months before and after January 1, 2000. When you receive a transaction receipt, check it for accuracy and save it to compare against your statement.

Develop a list of phone numbers for hospitals, police and fire departments and neighbors.

Cash: If you decide to withdraw cash, hold only as much as you would for any holiday weekend. Withdrawing large amounts of cash is unnecessary and may invite theft. Remember that financial institutions are well prepared for the date change and you have more than one payment option (e.g., checks, credit cards, debit cards, traveler's checks).

Medicine: As always, refill prescription medications when you have a five-to-seven day supply remaining. The pharmaceutical and health care industries are confident, based on experience, that following this standard practice is all that is needed for Y2K. If you have any questions about your health care needs, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or other health care provider.


Gasoline: As you would in preparation for a winter storm, keep your automobile gas tank above half full. Service stations are re-supplied regularly — sometimes as often as every other day.

Consumer Electronics: Check with manufacturers to see if the essential electronic equipment you use around your home is Y2K ready, especially personal computers, monitored security systems or programmable thermostats.

Telephones and Internet: Use telephones and the Internet only as necessary on January 1. "Testing" the
See Y2K on other side

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Police News



Adrienne Bane of Hoopston reported Wednesday that an unknown vehicle hit her 1991 Oldsmobile while it was parked in the 300 block of South Third St.

A new **Huffy** Power Cam dirt bike was found at 4:45 a.m. Thursday in the 500 block of West Maple. The bike is chrome with blue foam padding.

The owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

A **girl's pink and purple** Huffy 15 speed bicycle was found Thursday morning in the 800 block of East Thompson. The owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

Obituaries

BOWEN—Naomi C. Bowen, 83, of Hoopston, died at 9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 28, 1999 at Hoopston Community Memorial Hospital. Funeral services were at 2 p.m. Thursday at Brown-Alkire Funeral Home. Burial was in Iroquois Memorial Park, Watseka. Visitation was one hour before services Thursday at the funeral home.

SMITH—Mildred C. Smith, 86, of Rankin, died at 5:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 28, 1999 at Country Health

Care Center, Gifford. Funeral services will be at 10 a.m. Friday at Wolfe Funeral Home, Rankin. Burial will be in Drummer Township Cemetery, Gibson City. Visitation was 6-8 p.m. Thursday at the funeral home. Memorials are suggested to Country Health Care Center, Gifford.

In the Hospital



Hoopston Community Memorial Hospital
Dec. 29

Admitted: Jim Good, Jean Smith, Fred Hasbargen, Betty Brown, Dearul Huckleby, Hoopston; Carol Schroeder, Milford.

Discharged: Raymond Yeats, Regina Devillers, Betty Wells, Fred Hasbargen.

Weather



Sunny today. High 47. Tonight, clear. Low 35. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 55, low 40. Sunday, chance of rain, mixed with snow Sunday night. High 48, low 30. Monday, partly sunny. High 42, low 27.

For current weather conditions, call the **Hoopston Weather Line** at (217) 283-6221.

Y2K continued from other side

systems to see if they work or engaging in long conversations could create delays greater than those experienced during high volume usage periods such as Mother's Day.

Scams: Beware of Y2K scams. Be skeptical if someone tries to sell you a product, service or investment that is "Y2K safe" or wishes to sell you Y2K insurance. Never give out your bank account, credit card or Social Security number unless you initiated the call or contact.

For more Y2K information, call 1-888-USA-4-Y2K. Recorded messages are available 24 hours a day while information specialists are available from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (EST).

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