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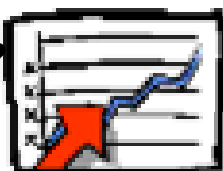
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Website designed to promote Hoopeston job growth is up

A website designed to create jobs in Hoopeston is now on the Internet.

The site, at www.cityofhoopeston.org, was activated last week, said Robert Davis.

Davis, of CDA Marketing, Watseka, was paid \$14,500 by the city to create the website, which is designed to draw attention to available commercial buildings and land in Hoopeston. Davis' fee was paid with tax increment financing (TIF) money.

The site is positioned using key word ranking in categories such as "commercial land for sale", "commercial property Illinois" and "business building for sale." It is among the top three rankings for sponsored matches of 16 phrases, Davis said. "That's a pretty significant accomplishment in just eight days," he said. "We're out there."

One way word of the site is spreading is through links with other Hoopeston sites. Davis has requested links from such places as the Hoopeston Public Library and school district. However, the city page will not reciprocate with links to other sites because it is a non-profit economic development site.

Alderman Bill Goodwine, who oversaw the project from the city's perspective, said the intent was not to provide an all-encompassing city web page. "The reason we hired (Davis) was basically to make a job creation program," he said. "If we wanted to make a city web site, we would've used someone local, although I have no problem if it grows into that."

The site lists available properties and highlights Hoopeston's strengths, such as the hospital, school system and available work force. Each area is positive because Davis said research shows that perceptions of a city, not the reality, matter most. The site showcases an "extremely pro-business city council doing what it can to improve the outside perception

of Hoopeston," he said. "Hopefully it will stir momentum and help the city over the next few years."

Davis presented his initial proposal to the city council in February 2002. He signed a contract Sept. 17, saying the site would be online in 12 weeks but Davis extended the deadline to meet with more groups and get a clearer picture of the community. "I wanted to give personal attention to the town, meet more people, get my finger on the pulse of the community," he said.

Davis agreed to oversee the site and respond to queries for three years, but he and Goodwine see the relationship lasting longer.

"So many people expressed dissatisfaction that the city couldn't handle the leads generated," Davis said. "People said not a single member of the council could field queries." To solve that, Davis said he will monitor the site for longer than three years.

Goodwine agreed that Davis may handle that aspect for some time to come - without additional city funds.

Davis negotiated finders fees with owners, to be paid if property sells because of the site. "Hopefully, the finders fee will be enough to keep him interested," Goodwine said, adding he is impressed with the site because of its upbeat attitude. "It certainly puts Hoopeston's best side forward," he said.

Whether the site will accomplish its purpose will take time to determine. "There's only one measurement and that's jobs," Goodwine said.

In discussing a website last year, Goodwine expressed doubts that it would prove the city's salvation, an attitude he still holds. "I thought then that there was less than a 50 percent chance of it working," he said. "I remain hopeful but no more optimistic than I originally was."

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Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Exemption Notice

The Danville Supervisor of Assessments office will be mailing out the Senior Citizen Assessment Freeze Exemption forms for 2003 sometime in January or early February. You must be 65 years of age and have a whole-household income of \$40,000.00 a year or less to qualify for this exemption. If you have filed for this exemption in the past, you should receive one in the mail.

If you do not receive a copy in the mail by the middle of February, or if you have not signed up for this exemption in the past and think you might qualify, contact the Grant Township Assessor's office at 283-6868. The filing deadline for this exemption is July 1, 2003.



Bowling Scores



Thursday Night City Men's League

Standings 1/16/03

1. Tax Service Plus	98	35
2. Con Agra Store Brands	74	59
3. Pla-Mor Lanes	70	63
4. Hoopeston Monument	68	65
5. Team America	65	68
6. Tons of Fun Band	60	73
7. Read's	60	73
8. Razor's Edge	37	96

High Team Handicap Game: Read's 1,070; **High Team Handicap Series:** Read's 3,045; **High Individual Scratch Game:** Lee Curry 255; **High Individual Scratch Series:** Bob Ponder 686.

Hall of Shame: Joe Perez 105.

Friday Night Mixed League

Standings 1/17/03

1. Tax Service Plus	93	47
2. Hoopeston Weather Line	90.5	49.5

3. Northsiders	86	54
4. Bar	86	54
5. T&L Lawn Care	84	56
6. Lucky Dogs	75.5	64.5
7. RCP	75	65
8. Stone Cold	71	69
9. Polson & Company	63.5	76.5
10. Lazer & Lights	56	84
11. P.U.'s	51.5	88.5
12. Bye	8	132

High Team Handicap Game: Polson & Co. 880, Lazer & Lights 863, RCP 841; **High Team Handicap Series:** RCP 2,467, P.U.s 2,415, Lazer & Lights 2,409; **Men's High Scratch Game:** Michael Carswell 261, Tony Gress 236, Jeremy Lane 225; **Men's High Scratch Series:** Tony Gress 646, Michael Carswell 640, Dave Hughes 620; **Women's High Scratch Game:** Glenda Reed 206, Kellie Underwood 205, Amy Rieches 197; **Women's High Scratch Series:** Glenda Reed 558, Sharon Polson 479, Karen Porth 474.

Vermilion County group to join national cleanup campaign

Keep Vermilion County Beautiful is joining the national Great American Cleanup 2003.

Cities and towns across the county are invited to participate, said Lynn Wolgamot, Keep Vermilion County Beautiful director. "This is going to be a great opportunity for everyone to get involved, she said.

The cleanup event runs from March 2 to May 31.

Each community or group will be asked to pick a date they want to do a cleanup in their municipality or neighborhood. "We'll help them get organized and we'll even give them a supply kit to make the project easier," Wolgamot said. The national organization and its sponsors provide materials and supplies for the cleanups, including garbage bags.

Police News



Police are investigating a hit-and-run accident at 12:45 p.m. Sunday at Market and Main.

Jennifer L. Moyer of Danville, in a 2002 Chevrolet, entered the intersection and was hit by an unidentified car. Moyer went to the police station to report the accident and told police the other driver was to go to the station as well, but he did not.

The project is a good way to get ready for the 2003 Farm Progress Show in September, said Paul Sermer-sheim, Danville Community Improvement coordinator.

Letters are being sent to mayors and community leaders throughout the county asking them to pick a cleanup date in the target time, recruit volunteers and choose sites to clean up.

For more information, call Wolgamot at (217) 431-2662.

Obituaries

LANDRAM - Lee Landram, 44, of Wellington, died at 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 16, 2002 at home. A family memorial service will be held at a later date. The Brown-Alkire Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Weather



Partly sunny today. High 22. Tonight, mostly clear. Low 8. Tomorrow, chance of snow. High 15, low 8.

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

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