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Hoopeston Council considers adding spark to fireworks

Hoopeston's fireworks display may get a spark from the Hoopeston City Council.

The city's civic committee met with the Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce, fireworks sponsors, said Alderwoman Nancy Stipp, civic committee chairperson, at Tuesday's council meeting.

Stipp is recommending that the city donate \$2,000, the amount the Chamber is short of its \$6,000 goal.

Alderman John Haughee agreed, saying the city "should take an active role" in what he called "an important celebration."

However, the city budget has \$500 earmarked for fireworks, said Alderman Bill Goodwine, finance committee chairman. "Everything has gone down and we can't come up with it because we're down, too," Goodwine said. If, however, the committee recommends the

city donate \$2,000, "we can do it," he said. "We just won't do something else."

The council will vote on the donation on June 17.

In unrelated action, the council:

approved a \$5,040 bid from Silver Brothers Construction for three doors at the Civic Center. Other bids were from HOW Construction for \$10,190 and Jackson Quality Construction for \$11,450.

heard from Brian Mihelich of Envirogen, that an environmental study will begin Wednesday at the former Carnival Video building, Baer's Motel and Baer's Trailer Park. The city received a \$39,252 brownfields grant from the Illinois EPA to pay for the work.

heard a complaint from resident Gerald Minick about the tornado siren and a concern from Goodwine about wood piles at M&N Pallet on Rt. 9.

West Nile Virus history, prevention tips given at meeting

Keeping away mosquitoes that carry West Nile Virus can be done with a few easy precautions.

West Nile Virus was the topic of Kolby Riggle's presentation at the Hoopeston Neighborhood Watch Monday. Riggle is an environmental health specialist with the Vermilion County Health Department.

The virus is transmitted when female mosquitoes - bite infected birds, then bite humans, Riggle said. The mosquitoes are most often the Culex (house mosquito) species and while many birds may carry West Nile Virus, crows and blue jays are used as an indicator because they do not survive the virus.

Nearly 80 percent of those who are infected show little or no symptoms of the disease, Riggle said. Approximately 20 percent have some symptoms, including flu-like symptoms such as headaches and body aches. Only

See WEST NILE on other side



Kolby Riggle, environmental health specialist for the Vermilion County Health Department, discusses issues with Mike Fink after Monday's Neighborhood Watch meeting.

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West Nile continued from other side

about two percent of the population have significant symptoms, which may include convulsions, coma, muscle weakness, encephalitis or death.

West Nile Virus was first found in the United States in 1999 in New York City, Riggle said. Although new to America, the disease has been in some areas, including West Africa and Central Asia, for many years.

In 2002, 4,100 cases of the virus were reported. Illinois leads the U.S. with 884 reported human cases and 64 deaths. The disease especially hits young children, the elderly and people with compromised immune systems, he said.

West Nile Virus "didn't seem to follow the normal migratory flight paths of birds" because it was first found in the Chicago area, rather than in the southern part of the state.

In Vermilion County, two cases of West Nile Virus have been confirmed. One person was hospitalized with the disease and the second was treated at home. A third person was suspected of contracting the virus but tests were negative, Riggle said.

While many people are alarmed by West Nile Virus, Riggle said people must keep it in perspective. While 280 people died of West Nile in 2002, 20,000 Americans die every year from influenza, he said.

The easiest way to be safe from the virus is to eliminate the mosquitoes that carry it, Riggle said. The most common mosquito attraction is stagnant water. Mosquitoes do not breed in the chlorinated water of swimming pools but they "really icky-looking water" that collects in swimming pool covers and children's wading pools, he said.

Other possible sources of stagnant water include bird baths, toys, garden equipment or containers that hold water, clogged gutters, leaky faucets or pet bowls, uncovered boats or boat covers, trees with rot or hollow stumps, flat roofs without adequate drainage and trash and discarded tires.

Other protective measures include:

- using insect repellant with 35 to 50 percent DEET, especially from dusk to dawn. Children between the ages of two and 12 should use products with 10 percent or less DEET. Products should not be applied to children's hands, eye area and mouth.
- wearing long sleeved clothing, long pants and hats.

- fixing or installing window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out of buildings.

Municipalities may do some things to abate the mosquito population, such as community wide spraying or putting larvacides - tablets which kill mosquito larvae, in storm drains and catch basins.

On the state and national level, little is being done to actively combat the disease, Riggle said. The Illinois Department of Public Health has printed brochures about prevention and West Nile Virus but "they're not sending money to counties and cities.

Illinois does, however, have a surveillance network for a state bird survey. The survey was started in the early 1970s to track St. Louis Encephalitis.

This year, counties with under 100,000 residents are allowed to have 10 birds tested for West Nile Virus, Riggle said. So far, one blue jay has been tested at the University of Illinois Veterinary Clinic. It tested negative, he said.

Vermilion County is only testing dead blue jays and crows. The birds must not be in a state of decomposition, must have their eyes intact and not have signs of another cause of death. Anyone finding a bird meeting the criteria may call Riggle at (217) 431-2662.

For more information on West Nile Virus, go to www.cdc.gov/westnile

Police News



Troy D. Burke, 19, of St. Petersburg, Fla., was arrested at 9:36 p.m. Monday. He was arrested on charges of driving under the influence, driving under the influence with a blood alcohol content greater than .08, no seat belt and making an improper turn.

Police said they found Burke sitting in his vehicle in a ditch in the 1000 block of West Orange.

He was released on \$300 cash bond. His vehicle was towed from the scene.

Weather



Mostly cloudy today. High 68. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 50. Tomorrow, partly sunny, chance of thunderstorms late. High 72, low 55

For current weather conditions, call (217) 283-6221.

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Thursday-Friday-Saturday
Friday:

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Classifieds

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