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Hoopeston Area district has 'worst case scenario' fiscal year

For many years, Hoopeston Area's annual budget has been prepared with the worst-case scenario in mind.

In 2003, the district experienced that scenario, according to the district business director.

Last fiscal year, which ended June 30, the district's education fund - used for the bulk of school spending, including salaries, ran \$460,000 short, said Don Dean at Thursday's school board meeting.

The shortfall resulted primarily from receiving less income than expected, due to state cuts in reimbursement programs, having fewer students and low interest on investments, he said.

State aid payments in the last fiscal year were equivalent to the 1998 level, Dean said. Those payments make up almost half the district's education fund. "That's a long way to go back when most of your money comes from state aid," he said.

Hoopeston Area lost more money when its enrollment dropped. About 70 fewer students attended last year than the year before. The district has lost approximately 400 students in the last 10 years. Adding just 100 students would add about \$500,000 per year in state aid, Dean said.

The loss would have been greater had the district not used \$300,000 of one-time Charlotte Ann Russell Trust money, Dean said. "We always said 'we'll save it for someday when we need it,'" Dean said. "Well, someday came in 2003."

While revenues dropped, budgeted expenses for the fiscal year exceeded estimates by only \$52,000, an increase of only half of one percent.

Dean does not expect the financial picture to improve. "It's not going to get any easier over the next few years," he said. "We finished as good as we could finish."

Dean said Hoopeston Area will not request a tax hike

for next year. The district's working cash fund of approximately \$887,000, will cover deficits for 2003-04.

In other action, the board approved a resolution to formally initiate discussion with Rossville-Alvin on a cooperative high school or any other type of appropriate reorganization.

The resolution calls for discussion on using both districts' facilities, name changes, color and mascot changes and appropriate equality of representation on a governing board.

The resolution also indicates the board's interest in promoting a reorganization feasibility study and its willingness to pay the expense of the study.

Dr. William Phillips, a consolidation consultant, spoke separately to the Hoopeston Area and Rossville-Alvin boards on July 1. He said feasibility study would cost about \$10,000 but that state incentives would pay all but about \$2,000 of the cost.

The resolution, which passed unanimously, was to be sent to Rossville-Alvin prior to that board's meeting Monday night.

The Rossville-Alvin board voted down a co-op high school with Bismarck-Henning, 4-3. Since then, R-A requested a co-op with Bismarck for girls basketball. "I told (R-A board president) Dennis (Price) we'd be happy to take it if Bismarck-Henning won't," said HA board president Larry Lobb.

Governor to be in Danville

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich is scheduled to make an appearance in Danville Monday night.

Blagojevich will be at the Deluxe Restaurant, 21 W. North St., from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 per person and will be available at the door.

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Briefly

Multi Agency van schedule

This week's schedule for the Hoopeston Multi Agency transportation project is: Monday, Hoopeston shuttle; Tuesday, Lafayette, Ind., (leave at 8 a.m.); Wednesday, Danville; Thursday, Hoopeston shuttle; Friday, closed. For more information or to arrange a ride, call the Multi Agency at (217) 283-5544.

Community center activities include: Monday, ladies bridge, noon; Tuesday, ladies euchre, noon; Thursday,

men's coffee 9:30 a.m., men's euchre, noon; Friday, closed.

Music Booster winners

This week's winners in the Hoopeston Area Music Booster calendar drawing are: July 21, Russell Leigh and Associates; July 22, Angie Schieler; July 23, Bob and Ellen Lingley; July 24, Hoopeston Cissna Park Veterinary Service; July 25, Debbie Benjamin, \$200.

Bowling meeting

Tuesday Night Classic League will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Pla-Mor Lanes. More bowlers with an

average of 165-180 are needed.

If interested or unable to attend, call Randy Hiltz, (815) 889-5472, Doug Wagoner, (217) 283-6541 or Pla-Mor Lanes, 283-5195.

New parent orientation

Danville Area Community College will host an orientation for parents of incoming students from 9-10:30 a.m. and again from 6-7:30 p.m. Wednesday. The meeting will be held in the lower level of Lincoln Hall in the Copper Penny Room.

The orientation will include presentations on programs

and services, the differences between high school and college and on the campus in general. Financial aid and career services staff will also be available. Registration for the orientation is not required.

Registration is underway for fall classes, many of which begin Aug. 18. To register for full-time status, call (217) 443-8750; for less than full-time, call 443-8800.

Meetings

- Rossville Village Board, 7 p.m. Monday, village office.
- Rossville-Alvin School Board, 7 p.m. Monday, grade school library.
- Hoopeston City Council finance committee, 10 a.m. Tuesday, city hall, to discuss TIF.

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One-day applications taken for summer energy assistance

East Central Illinois Community Action Agency has received funding for energy assistance payments to help low-income households who have a member who is particularly at-risk from summer heat.

On Monday, July 21, the agency will accept applications for cooling assistance for households with a member 60 or over; those with at least one child age two or younger; and from households where a doctor certifies that a member has a disease or illness, such as heart disease or emphysema, that makes air conditioning necessary. A doctor's slip will be required.

No other households qualify for assistance.

Applications will be accepted from 7:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. at the agency's administrative office at 56 N. Vermilion. Senior citizens may apply at CRIS Senior Services, 309 N. Franklin, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Applicants who received heating assistance in the winter need only bring a doctor's slip if applicable, and will need to fill out a short application. Applicants who did not receive heating assistance in the past year must bring proof of income for the past 30 days; Social Security cards for all household members, power bills and a doctor's slip, if applicable.

Income guidelines are: \$1,108 for one person; \$1,493 for two people; \$1,878 for three; \$2,263 for four people; and \$385 per each additional person.

Qualifying households will receive a flat \$150 payment directly to their utility company. Households which are disconnected from electric service may receive an additional \$100 for reconnection.

For more information, call ECICAP at (217) 443-2705.

Police News

Shandrica L. Thomas, 29, of 608 W. Lincoln, Hoopeston, was arrested at 1:18 p.m. Friday at city hall.

Thomas, wanted on a Vermilion County warrant for cruelty to animals, was released on \$285 cash bond.

Myrna J. Moore, 23, of 503 N. Seventh Ave., was arrested at 7:30 p.m. Friday at North Seventh Ave. and West McCracken.

Moore, wanted on a Vermilion County traffic warrant, was released on \$129 cash bond.

Genaro D. Zamarippa, 22, of 709 S. Third, was charged with disobeying a stop sign and driving while license revoked at 1:47 a.m. Saturday.

Zamarippa, arrested at Maple and Third, was released on a notice to appear.

A **cell phone** was found Saturday morning on Cemetery Road. The owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

Weather

Chance of thunderstorms today. High 82. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 61. Tomorrow, chance of thunderstorms. High 75, low 59.

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

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