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Hoopeston Police Department to have new firing range

The old Santa Claus house, a few old desks from the Hoopeston Area School District and lots and lots of dirt will soon give Hoopeston police officers a place to practice their marksmanship.

Those items and others are being used as parts of a new gun range for the department.

Located off Route 9, south of the Ameren-CIPS substation, the range is being built as a joint effort by many city departments, said Sgt. James Goodrum, firearms instructor and one of the department's range officers.

Nestled in the city limits on city-owned property, the range is positioned to allow officers to practice shooting safely. The range is more than a half-mile from Lover's Lane Road and nearly three quarters of a mile from the high/middle school. A 10-foot berm on the west side and 6-foot berm on the east have been joined by a manmade berm to the south, where the targets will be. The new berm is 35 feet wide and deep and 22 feet high.

The range will be primitive but functional. The Santa House will be used to store targets and related items. The desks will be used on the firing line to hold extra ammunition and will be put in the building when not in use. An inverter will convert the power from a vehicle battery into an energy source for 50 watt 12 volt lights inside the building, a 150 watt floodlight for night shooting and for a public address system.

The location is close to Casey's General Store, so



An off-duty Sgt. James Goodrum of the Hoopeston Police Department hammers in the base for a target stand at what will be a new gun range for the department. Looking on is Jerid Dunavan of Rossville, Goodrum's grandson, who also assisted Goodrum with the stands.

ice and soft drinks will be near, and close to Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital - just in case, Goodrum said. "This is perfect," he said.

While many gun ranges cost in the neighborhood of \$250,000 to build, Hoopeston has gotten off fairly inexpensively, paying only for labor. Street and alley department employees hauled in more than 50 trucks

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Range

of dirt to make the southward berm. The water and parks departments have also chipped in, mowing the site and burying posts to block the entrance to the range.

Others have donated time and effort to the project. As of last week, Goodrum had donated nearly 40 hours to the project “and I’m not done yet,” he said.

Having its own gun range will be an asset to the department, Goodrum said. The local range the department used to use closed about four years ago. Since then, officers have had to qualify at the Public Safety Building in Danville. “Getting all the officers and Auxiliary there at one time was next to impossible,” he said. “We had to have a place to shoot.”

Hoopeston officers have rarely had to shoot sus-



Blown away

An American flag rests on the curb of Seventh St., near Rt. 9 after a storm early Monday morning. High winds also damaged a large tree at Seventh and Maple. The tree blocked the street until it was removed by city crews later Monday morning.

pects but they must still train to hit their targets. “We have to stay proficient and hit whatever we aim at,” Goodrum said.

Police use .45 and .40 caliber and 9mm handguns and shotguns and will train with those at the range. Depending on their scores of a maximum 400 points, officers fall into four categories: Tyro for those shooting 70-74 percent; Marksman, in the 75-85 percent range; Sharpshooter, 86-92 percent; Expert, 93-96 percent; and Master, 97-100 percent. Officers shoot standing and kneeling and are timed on their shots.

Speed is essential for police shooting. “If it takes you 10 seconds, you possibly could be dead,” Goodrum said.

All Hoopeston’s officers are in the top three categories, he added.

Qualifying is done in daylight and at night and officers practice not only straight shooting, but also

Police News



A 62-year-old man reported Sunday that someone took food from his home in the 700 block of South Fourth St. The front door frame was also broken.

Briefly

Vacation Bible Schools

- Super Cool Undersea Bible Adventure vacation bible school will be held June 27-30 at the First Presbyterian Church, 915 E. Orange. The program will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. nightly. For information, call Sue Burton, 283-7550.
- Dive into SCUBA Vacation Bible School at First Church of Good, 1004 E. Orange, Hoopeston. It will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Aug. 4-8. Classes are for children three years through sixth grade. An adult class is also scheduled. For information, call (217) 283-9330.

Weather



Chance of thunderstorms today and tonight. High 75, low 59. Tomorrow, partly sunny. High 76, low 59.

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

firing around obstacles such as telephone poles and vehicles. Those barricades will also be added to the range.

The range will be available for other law enforcement agencies to use but will not be open to the public since it is illegal for anyone other than a police officer to fire a gun in the city limits.

Classifieds

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