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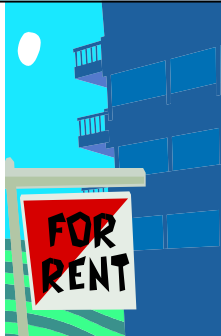
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Homeward bound

Suzi Root, Maple kindergarten teacher, shepherds her charges after the first day of school Tuesday. School will be dismissed at 2:05 and 2:20 for grade schools and middle/high schools respectively, until after Labor Day.

Local taxing bodies to get more money from county TIF error

A snafu in tax increment financing districts will result in more money for local tax districts.

The error was caused by miscommunication between the Vermilion County Clerk's office and the county treasurer's office, said Treasurer Sue Stine. Money that should have gone to taxing districts - the Hoopeston Area School District, Hoopeston Public Library District, Grant Township and City of Hoopeston - were instead placed in a collector's account at the county. "It's pretty hard to nail down all the money in that account," she said.

The discrepancy was discovered when Westville school officials brought a shortfall to the attention of the county. Taxing districts in Oakland and Tilton will also benefit, Stine said.

The mix-up could result in several hundred thousands of dollars being distributed to taxing bodies.

Superintendent Mark Conolly of Hoopeston Area said an estimated \$112,000 is owed to the district from real estate taxes paid in 2000 and 2001.

Conolly said district officials noticed fewer tax dollars coming in but because tax money information was not clearly delineated, chalked it up to delinquent taxes.

The school district receives the biggest share of tax money and is hardest hit by the TIF district, Conolly said.

TIF districts receive their money from property taxes. When a TIF district is formed, current taxes form the base level. Money from subsequent increases go into the TIF fund rather than to taxing bodies. Of every \$1 in the TIF, 45 cents is money that would have gone to the school district if Hoopeston did not have a TIF district, Conolly said.

See TIF on other side

Tomato Contest

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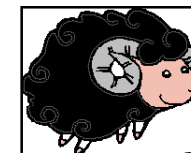
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City approves computerized water meter reading system

In a 5-1 vote, the Hoopeston City Council on Tuesday approved purchasing a radio read water meter reading system.

The city will initially purchase 500 meters at \$148.50 each plus buy a computer and software from Underground Pipe and Valve. The first phase of the project will cost \$96,900. Over the next five years, a total of more than 2,000 meters will be purchased, said Mayor Chalmers Flint. "We've been trying to update the water department for three years," he said. "We finally found one we want."

The new system will save man-hours, eliminate the need to estimate meter readings in winter months and is expected to cut down on the number of complaints, Flint said.

Alderman Bill Goodwine voted against the purchase. "It's a lot of money," he said. "No business I know of would spend \$200,000 to save three-fourths of a man. Why would we spend \$200,000 to save less than one job?"

Standard meters would have cost the city \$50 each, he said.

In unrelated business, the council heard from Brenda Pancake, a resident of South Market, who complained

about recent tree-trimming done at the request of AmerenCIPS. "It looks like hell," she said. "Those trees weren't trimmed, they were butchered."

Alderman Rod Kaag said the city was told by the utility company that "that's the way it is," and said employees of Asplundh, of Bloomington, who trimmed the trees, admitted they were butchering the trees but were told to do so by AmerenCIPS.

The trees were trimmed to allow the utility to move power poles on Market.

In unrelated action, the council

- approved a \$14,400 bid a thermal imaging camera for the fire department.
- accepted perpetual care agreements from Delores Crabtree.
- will seek bids for a sand filtration system and cement work at the swimming pool.

Police News

Jessica L. Roberts, 21, of 201 S. Johnson, Rankin, was arrested after a traffic stop at 11:53 p.m. Monday in the 300 block of North Market. She was charged with no valid driver's license and was released on a notice to appear.

Stine said her office is working on correcting this year's numbers and will work on the previous two years after that. The process should take about two weeks, she said.

Stine said she thought she noticed an error last year but said she brought it to the attention of the county clerk's office where it was dismissed. "we were never on the same page at the same time," she said.

Stine apologized for the mistake. "I'm sorry this happened," she said. "We're supposed to be better than this."

Weather

Partly sunny, hot, humid today. High 90. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 68. Tomorrow, partly sunny, chance of thunderstorms. High 90, low 65.

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

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