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Hoped-for motel proposal nixed, mayor to keep searching

A hoped-for motel in Hoopeston isn't going to materialize - at least not yet.

Mayor Chalmers Flint said Tuesday that he received a fax from the developer who had initially expressed interest in building a motel in the city saying that he will not be opening a motel here.

"The city of Hoopeston loses again," Flint said.

Terre Haute, Ind., will most likely get the motel, Flint said, adding the developer's son, who has an MBA in motel management and is a partner in his father's company, wants to put the motel in a larger area.

Flint said he plans to call the developer back one more time to ask that he crunch the numbers again, raising the price from the planned \$50 per

night to \$60. The \$10 increase would net about a \$40,000 profit for the developer.

Flint also said that had the city's developer for the corner of Rtes. 1 and 9 acted last year, Hoopeston might be well on its way to having a motel.

Despite the setback, Flint said he will continue trying to find a motel developer. "I'll keep looking," he said, "but I don't know where to look." He has talked to officials in Watseka, the corner developer and Tax Increment Financing developer Tom Lowe to see if they can be of help.

"I'm not discouraged but it's definitely sad for the city of Hoopeston because we really need a motel," he said.

Flint had worked with the motel developer for approximately two years. Getting a motel in the

Candidates say meth is one of biggest problems in county

Candidates for Vermilion County State's Attorney agree there are some serious problems facing the county and that one of the biggest is methamphetamine.

Republican incumbent Frank Young and Democrat challenger William Donahue were the featured speakers at Monday's Hoopeston Neighborhood Watch meeting.

Young spoke of how the county has changed in the last several year. "We're dealing with a different



YOUNG



DONAHUE

type of atmosphere, mentality," he said. An influx of people from Chicago's housing projects has brought "friends, family, boyfriends who invade on the weekends," bring with them drugs and survival skills honed in the projects.

The state's attorney's office, along with other law enforcement agencies, are working together to try to work on lowering the number of criminals coming to Vermilion County, Young said. He has met with legislative leaders, mayors

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Candidates continued from other side

and law enforcement representatives to try to cut the number of vouchers for people coming from the Chicago projects and are trying to determine if the number of Vermilion County public housing units can be decreased. Also, he said, the Illinois State Police and U.S. Marshals Office do sweeps of public housing to look for drugs and illegal weapons. “What we really want to do is discourage people from coming down who shouldn’t be here,” Young said.

Drugs, especially meth, and violence are but two

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problems facing the state’s attorney’s office. An increasing number of cases, including seven pending murder trials, stress the department’s budget. Another felony prosecutor is needed but “realistically, we’re not going to get more money from the county,” said Young, who handles 230-240 felony cases annually.

In dealing with drug offenders, Young said treatment is one option used to keep people out of prison. First offenders are normally given probation. Repeat offenders are often sentenced to periodic imprisonment, getting of jail to attend treatment. This way, offenders are kept in the area, near family and other support people. “Unfortunately, you can’t send them all to prison, Young said. “There isn’t enough room.”

According to Donahue, there is more room in state prisons than is commonly thought. “The Department of Corrections is not overcrowded right now,” he said, adding that if he is elected, he will plea bargain fewer drug cases and send more people to prison.

Donahue, who has been a prosecutor for 21 years and is currently an Assistant State’s Attorney in Iroquois County, has worked under every Vermilion County State’s Attorney’s from Craig DeArmond to Young and said there are “institutional problems” in the office. One, he said, is plea bargaining too many cases, which sometimes “puts judges in a box” where they grant probation when the original offense would require

Police News



Ronald F. King, 62, of Hoopeston was ticked for operating an uninsured motor vehicle at 1:53 p.m. Monday.

Police said King, in a 1994 Ford, backed from a driveway at 726 S. Third St. and hit a parked 1998 semi owned by Heniff Transportation of Alsip.

Amanda L. Blakey, 20, of 711-D S. First Ave., was arrested at 9:14 p.m. Monday in the 700 block of South First Ave. She was charged with disorderly conduct on complaints that she had loud parties in her apartment Sunday and Monday nights.

Blakey was released on notices to appear.

A **38-year-old** Hoopesotn woman reported Tuesday that someone slashed the rubber pool in her yard in the 600 block of East Young.

prison time.

Donahue said he knows firsthand the effect drug dealers can have on neighborhoods, having had a dealer live in his neighborhood. Working together, the neighbors and law enforcement officers were able to arrest the dealer and make the neighborhood safe again. “I identify with people in neighborhoods,” Donahue said.

Donahue cited statistics showing the number of meth cases increasing. In 2001, three meth cases were filed in Vermilion County. In 2002, the number jumped to 22, followed by 27 last year and 39 so far this year. “It’s a mushrooming problem,” said Donahue, adding that the drug is also a safety and economic issue that can harm children and destroy neighborhoods. “It’s a serious, serious problem,” he said. “We need to take a closer look at the law and not reduce the charges.”

By law, possession of 900 grams of meth is punishable by 15 years in prison, Donahue said. “That sounds harsh until you realize what (meth) is doing to

Bowling meeting set

The men’s Wednesday night bowling league will have its organizational meeting at 7 p.m. at Pla-Mor Lanes Bowling Alley, 719 West Elm St.

Obituaries

CADE - Funeral services for Lois Orene Cade, 90, of Hoopeston will be at 1 p.m. Saturday at First Christian Church, Hoopeston. Burial will be in Floal Hill Cemetery. Visitation will be 6-8 p.m. Friday at Brown-Alkire Funeral Home. Memorials are suggested to Hoopeston Community Nursing Home, 701 E. Orange St., Hoopeston IL 60942. Mrs. Cade died at 6:09 p.m. Saturday at the nursing home.

Weather



Chance of showers today. High 71. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 49. Tomorrow, partly cloudy. High 70, low 49.

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

our community. It’s killing us. Methamphetamine is so serious, I think we need to take a tougher approach.

If elected, Donahue said he would like to do two things: form a felony review committee between law enforcement and his office and improve community involvement.

The felony review committee would allow the office to be kept up-to-date on problems in communities and could help both sides focus on those problems, he said. And improving community involvement might help develop creative solutions for legal problems. “We can make a change without spending a lot of money.”

The next Neighborhood Watch meeting will be

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219-232

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