

Keep Our Hoopeston Area Schools Healthy & Strong!

1. There has been no school tax increase for 31 years.
2. In 31 years, expenses have increased 57%.
3. 35.5 school positions have already been eliminated over the past 5 years.
4. Future staff and program cuts are on the horizon.
5. Sports, Music, Technology and the Arts could be eliminated.
6. Federal government pays only 16% of federally-mandated special education programs
7. State aid has decreased due to decrease in enrollment.
8. The State will not help us until we help ourselves.
9. 30% decrease in corporate revenue tax due to decline of our industrial base.
10. Property values decline without healthy schools. Healthy schools help increase property values by attracting and keeping people and businesses in the area.

Vote **YES** on November 2
for the Hoopeston Area
School Education Fund Tax
Referendum.

Vote **YES** for the future.

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Letters to the Editor

Vote Yes For The Children

On Tuesday when you enter the ballot booth, I ask that you vote yes on the School Referendum for the children of this school district. As an educator for 38 years and board president for the past 5 years, the board has for the first time in 31 years asked you to approve a tax increase for our educational fund.

This decision was not entered into lightly. We know that a tax increase is never a popular decision. After cutting approximately 20 positions last spring, we knew we had to try to save our school system and saw no other way but to make this difficult decision.

This decision is about the students in our schools and really nothing else. Our students deserve a first-class education, including, of course, the basics, but much more. They deserve to have music, both vocal and instrumental, art at all grade levels, physical education at all grade levels, technology courses at all grade levels, extra-curricular activities, and sports. These activities do so much in the way of building character and self-esteem. Yes, you can have a school system void of all but the basics, but this is not the world we live in.

I am proud of our school system in its present form. I could not be very proud knowing that this community has turned its back on our most precious asset, our children.

For the majority of the voters this will cost you probably about 50 cents a day or less. For some, the cost will be higher. A person who has a \$50,000 home will be taxed on 1/3 of that which is about \$17,000. The proposed tax increase of \$.90 per \$100 of assessed evaluation comes out to be \$153 per year. Is it worth it ? I think you know the answer to that question.

It may sound trite to say our children are our future. They truly are and we must not abandon them to a sec-

ond-class education. So, I ask you to search your hearts and vote yes for the children.

Larry D. Lobb
President

Hoopeston Area Board of Education

Deactivation is not best solution

When 80% of Illinois schools are in deficit spending, it is a crisis, not a financial problem. The taxpayers elect our state legislators and local school boards for direction and leadership. As Americans, we can respect their task and understand that public service can be a thankless job, yet exercise the freedom to influence and challenge their decisions and expect some degree of accountability.

Several attempts since 1954 to reform Illinois school funding to shift from property tax to sales and/or income tax have failed. A 50-year effort with results is not a problem, it is a "total failure." So I guess we just sit here and twiddle our thumbs until all the schools are bankrupt. What a disgrace!

Considering this 50-year-history, local school boards should know by now that they have only three choices:

1. Keep going back to the overburdened taxpayers to ask for more tax dollars.
2. Make an absolute commitment to being fiscally responsible: end wasteful spending and maintain a balanced budget.
3. Combine with neighboring schools in long-term solutions to the crisis.

In Rossville-Alvin's case:

1. The board should have asked for a tax referendum first - a weak survey of 377 compared to 1,580 registered voters is just a guess.
2. We all agree on those things the board has no control

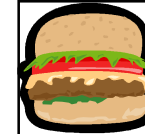
See **LETTERS** on other side

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Re-Elect
Susan
Ponder Miller
 Vermilion County
 Circuit Clerk
Vote November 2
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 got tougher on meth and
 other crimes that destroy
 our communities?
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Attention Farmers!

Vote YES for School Referendum

Assessed values for farmland will
 be decreasing 10% for next year's
 property taxes. This decrease will
 offset most, if not all of the tax
 increase proposed by the school
 referendum.

**Vote YES to ensure a
 continued quality education
 for our children &
 grandchildren.**

Letters continued from other side

over like reduced state aid, farmland assessments, etc.
 We also know we do have control over the bottom line.
 The school board is accountable to the taxpayers for
 being fiscally responsible, to control spending and bal-
 ance the budget. Many people believe the board has not
 been fiscally responsible and this will be the #1 reason
 why many will say no to deactivation.

Until you experience it, you can't understand how
 hard "this pill" is to swallow when you think of how it
 might have been prevented. Just look at the examples
 around us: Rankin, Wellington, Alvin, Henning Shel-
 don. When a town loses all its schools, it dies! The rami-
 fications are enormous: property values decline, more
 people move away, local mail delivery is lost (a burden
 on the elderly) and businesses close and can't sell, leav-
 ing many with little or no retirement. The list goes on.
 Welcome to the decline of rural America!

3. The same feasibility study was done 15-20 years ago
 and the results were the same. It's a shame the three
 north Vermilion County schools continue to lack the
 fortitude to move forward, take the experts' advice and
 consolidate all the high schools. The rewards would
 stretch way beyond the millions of dollars of incentives
 the state would give you to do so. Towns like Rossville
 could continue to survive if additional long-term agree-
 ments would be signed to maintain their grade schools.
 Is survival as a community too much to ask for?

Deactivation is a two-year agreement with no financial

Briefly

Multi Agency van to polls

The Multi Agency van will be in Hoopeston Tuesday to
 take voters to the polls. The van will run from 9 a.m. -4 p.m.
 and may be used by any voter who needs a ride. People who
 need a ride to the polls should call 283-5544 for a ride.

Neighborhood Watch

The county nursing home referendum is the topic of the
 Nov. 1 meeting of the Hoopeston Neighborhood Watch.
 Vermilion County Board members Gary Weinard and Rus-
 sell Pollitt, of the same party but on different sides of the
 issue, will speak at 6 p.m. at Country Terrace.

Auxiliary meeting

The Hoopeston VFW Auxiliary will meet at 7 p.m. Mon-
 day at the post home.

incentives, forces you to maintain an empty building,
 gives students and parents choices but results in them
 being separated from some of their classmates instead of
 all going together somewhere as a team to enjoy their
 high school experience and graduate together. The two
 years makes it temporary because you cannot predict
 with any degree of certainty the possible reasons why
 they may decide not to renew the agreement.

Through an intergovernmental agreement with both
 Bismarck and Hoopeston, Rossville's school building
 could fill the need for a north county vocational center,
 as well as our home school. We would receive tuition
 revenue to operate it without deactivation. Why was this
 not considered?

According to the Vermilion County Regional Superin-
 tendent of Schools Jim Trask, auditor Leigh's quote in
 Just the Facts on Oct. 28, 2004 is incorrect and mislead-
 ing. Mr. Leigh says that's not what he said: "leaving

Obituaries

BROWN - Oliver Daniel Brown, 86, of Hoopeston
 died at 5:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 29, 2004 at VA Illiana
 Health Care System, Danville. Funeral services will be
 at 11 a.m. Tuesday at Wolfe Funeral Home, Rossville.
 Burial with military rites will be in Floral Hill Cemetery.
 Visitation will be 4-7 p.m. Monday at the funeral home.
 Memorials may be made to a charity of the donor's
 choice.

WALDER - Braden J. Walder, infant son of Joe and
 Tricia Steiner Walder of Hoopeston died at 4:45 p.m.
 Thursday, Oct. 28, 2004 at Carle Foundation Hospital,
 Urbana. Private services will be held at Knapp Funeral
 Home, Cissna Park. Burial will be in Floral Hill Ceme-
 tery. Visitation was Saturday at the funeral home. Me-
 morials are suggested to New Beginning Women's
 Center, Watseka or Help Center-Crisis Pregnancy Cen-
 ter, Danville.

Weather



Chance of thunderstorms today and tonight. High 57,
 low 46. Tomorrow, chance of showers. High 51, low 32.

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

things as they are, on June 30, 2005, I'm going to shut
 them down."

He can't do that. We don't meet the criteria to do that.
 What he should have said was, when the deficit reaches
 a certain amount and there is no plan to correct, then he
 gives a report to the Regional Office of Trustees.

Nov. 2 is just another step in the process. Many felt they
 needed more time, informa-
 tion and consideration. The
 public's input should always
 be welcomed, not just when
 they agree with you. Yes or
 no, we have to move for-
 ward.

Marilyn Danner
 Rossville

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HOUSES FOR RENT

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