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## City leaders hear of area economic development assistance

Economic development in the modern world has to be thought of in local and larger terms, according to two area experts in the field.

Vicki Haugen, president and CEO of Vermilion Advantage and Todd Lee, East Central Region Manger for the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, were keynote speakers at a meeting of community leaders Wednesday evening.

The event was sponsored by the Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce economic development committee.

Lee, who oversees the state Opportunity Returns program locally, said Opportunity returns was started because "the 'one-size fits all' approach coming from Springfield and Chicago didn't fit the Hoopestons, the Rossvilles, the East Lynns" of the state.

Opportunity Returns uses local leaders to meet with community leaders and determine the type of economic development would work best in each region.

Economic development "is the most important thing," Lee said. "It's the heartbeat that makes your communities tick."

Lee compared economic development to a road worker who, on the first day of his job, painted a line three miles long. The second day, he painted a line 1.5 miles long and on the third day, the line was only a half mile long. When asked why he painted less each day, the worker replied that he was getting further and further away from the paint can. "I'm trying to bring the paint can to you," Lee said.

One of the big things that needs to change in Vermilion County is the attitude of its citizens, he said. "I think our part of the world is a great place to raise families" he



Todd Lee, right, head of the East Central division of Opportunity Returns, talks with Hoopeston Area Superintendent Mark Connolly after a meeting Thursday.

said, adding "Hoopeston is big enough to have city amenities but small enough to have small-town charm."

Dick Read, a member of the economic development committee, said he recently spoke with someone who was interested in locating a business in Hoopeston but was concerned about the negative attitude expressed by some residents.

While many people worry that local young people don't return after graduation from college, Lee suggested it is more important for them to return when they decide to settle down and raise families.

Another concern is attracting new businesses but Lee

**See DEVELOPMENT on other side**



# ORNAMENT OF THE WEEK

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## Police News



**Catherine A. Novak**, 45, of Virginia Beach, Va., was ticketed for failure to yield the right of way after an accident at 11:16 a.m. Sunday at North Seventh and East Seminary.

Police said Novak, in a 1996 Chevrolet, went through the yield sign at the intersection and hit a northbound 1997 Chevrolet driven by Seth M. Sims of Wellington.

No injuries were reported.

**The lawn ornament** reported missing Sunday from the 600 block of East Lincoln was found at 2:50 p.m. Sunday in the 600 block of South Fifth St.

## Development continued from other side

and Haugen said the biggest percentage of new jobs come from companies already existing in communities. A study of Vermilion County job expansion shows that approximately two-thirds of all new jobs created in the last 15 years came from companies already established in the county, Haugen said.

Existing businesses know the community and are often strong supporters. Lee talked about Silgan Containers, which worked with Vermilion Advantage on a \$2 million job expansion program. The company looked at other options, including evaluation of the company's other Midwest facilities. "It was the work ethic of people in Hoopeston, Ill. that could not be matched by their facilities in other communities," Lee said.

Encouraging and helping existing companies to grow is easier than attracting new companies because the site selection process "is really a process of elimination," Haugen said.

Companies develop minimum standards and want to see information only on sites that meet those standards. And the standards have changed significantly over Haugen's career. The average size building now requested is 150,000 sq. ft. "I can remember a time when it was less than 50," she said.

The number of needed acres has also risen, to an average of 158, far exceeding Hoopeston's primary commercial site, the Hoopeston Industrial Corporation's 30 acre site on Rt. 9.

Vermilion County has access to resources to help existing and new businesses, including the Danville Area



## New Books at the Library



### DVDs

Hostage (2005)

Hotel Rwanda (2005)

### Fiction

Cape Perdido by Marcia Muller (mystery)

Lifeguard: a Novel by James Patterson

The Color of Your Skin Ain't the Color of Your Heart by Michael Phillips (large print)

My Sister's Keeper: a Novel by Jodi Picoult (young adult)

The Ezekiel Option: a Novel by Joel C. Rosenberg (inspirational)

### Non-Fiction

Swimming With Scapulars: True Confessions of a Young

Small Business Development Center, headed by Ed Adrain, and the Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center.

Another important factor in economic development is a web presence, said both Haugen and Lee.

In that area, Hoopeston has been lacking. Newly-named hospital CEO David Elliott said that before he accepted the position, he researched Hoopeston on the Internet and found little information on the community.

That is changing, however. Hoopeston will soon have a more centralized web presence, said Bill Nicholls, an economic development committee member and member of the Hoopeston Industrial Corporation.

The HIC has commissioned a web page to link other Hoopeston web pages in a central place, Nicholls said.

Other things are happening in Hoopeston. The economic development committee has hired a Peace Corps Fellow who is expected to begin an 11-month stint in Hoopeston in late January. The woman will work on economic development projects, including a complete listing of available properties in Hoopeston.

"As a community, we're pulling ourselves together," Read said.

## Weather



Chance of thunderstorms today, tonight and tomorrow. High today 70, low 57. Tomorrow, high 64, low 41.

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

Catholic by Matthew Lickona

Cracking the Millionaire Code: Your Key to Enlightened Wealth by Mark Victor Hansen

The Tarot: History, Symbolism, and Divination by Robert M. Place

Folding Paper Cranes: an Atomic Memoir by Leonard Bird

Rolling Away: My Agony with Ecstasy by Lynn Marie Smith

Scholarships, Grants & Prizes 2006

## Obituaries

**SWANICK** - Mary Margaret Swanick, 92, of Hoopeston died at 1:55 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 6, 2005 at Hoopeston Community Memorial Nursing Home. Funeral services will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Anthony Catholic Church. Burial will be in Lyman Township Cemetery, Roberts. There will be no visitation. Memorials are suggested to the church, nursing home or a charity of the donor's choice. Brown-Alkire Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

## Classifieds

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