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Letters to the Editor

Hoopeston making positive strides

I am writing in response to Michael Norris' letter to the editor. Time and opportunity have not passed Hoopeston by. Like many small, rural communities, Hoopeston has been hit by the technological shift in manufacturing with fewer employees required and the impacts of globalization. Changes in the way business is conducted have taken its toll on small town America and Hoopeston is no exception to that trend. Does that mean opportunity is gone? NO! What it means is that communities, such as Hoopeston, need to seize new opportunities, identify creative and innovative solutions to address these changes that have resulted in rural America, and mobilize community residents to implement these solutions. The City of Hoopeston is doing just that!

Community volunteers and city leaders have put in numerous hours of their own personal time to work together to identify solutions and create a better quality of life for themselves and their families. This hard work has produced many positive accomplishments:

- 1)The city web site has been redone and now displays information for community residents, new potential residents, tourists and new businesses. We are continually upgrading and adding to this site to make Hoopeston competitive.
- 2)Through a community-wide visioning process, Hoopeston has established a visioning for the future and four high priority goal areas that committees are now working on (Business retention and expansion, housing, downtown revitalization, and infrastructure).
- 3)Hoopeston created an economic development committee three years ago and the group is actively working toward an improved Hoopeston economy. Four sites have been identified for industrial development. We have options on some of the land and are working

with property owners to annex those sites into the city. We are also identifying utilities lines to the sites and compiling cost estimates. The city has decided to take this a step further by creating a virtual building on the site; making Hoopeston very prepared when requests for proposals come through.

- 4)The city has created a full time economic development position and has recently obtained a VISTA volunteer to work full time on economic and community development projects for one year.
- 5)The Hoopeston Sweetcorn Festival had a record setting year and drew more visitors to the community than previous years. The pageant provides press and recognition throughout the United States, with representatives coming from approximately 30 states.
- 6)Drivin' the Dixie has become an annual event on Father's Day weekend and the Chamber of Commerce is looking at ways to further grow, market, and develop that event.
- 7)Vermilion Iron recently sold and has undergone tremendous cleanup over the last few months.
- 8)Hoopeston Hospital has installed a new entrance, a new lab and is continuing to make improvements to that vital community business.
- 9)The WHPO Business Expo which takes place annually provides an opportunity for Hoopeston business owners to highlight their business and an opportunity to draw people to Hoopeston.
- 10)The city is nearing completion on a community-wide housing assessment which will highlight the housing needs for Hoopeston and aid in attracting new development, if needed.
- 11)The city was recently recognized as an Illinois Main Street Community which makes Hoopeston part of a

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Letters *continued from other side*

national organization and will provide necessary guidance and marketing to revitalize Hoopeston's down town.

12)The city has formed a Mayor's Youth Council which has become very involved in the community. This group recently received a Governors Hometown Award; obtaining first place in Youth Involvement in their population category and was also recognized as a Governor's Cup finalist.

13)The city is in the process of having a design and plan completed for renovations to the community Civic Center, which would allow the facility to be more widely used.

14)The city recently received approval on the Remedial Action Plan for the proposed motel at the intersection of Routes 1 and 9; placing Hoopeston one step closer to having a motel to offer visitors to the community.

15)The city recently had a design completed for a community Skate Park.

16)Two new businesses have recently located in Hoopeston's down town.

Hoopeston did not digress overnight and in turn, it will not experience a revival overnight. On the other hand, progress is incremental and every step forward, whether big or small, will aid in allowing Hoopeston to attract new businesses, attract new residents, attract tourists, and become an example of a small community that is able to creatively grow and develop in the midst of circumstances out of its control, such as the loss of manufacturing and jobs.

I am confident that Hoopeston will experience growth in the years ahead. In recent years, there has been a trend back to small town America. Between July 2005 and July 2006, the population of non-metro America grew by 0.6 percent. Net domestic migration from metro areas accounted for nearly half of this growth. People choose to work in larger cities where the majority of higher paying jobs exist but they are choosing to raise their families in small towns due to the low crime rate, quality schools, lower cost of living and the friendliness and closeness that small towns have to offer.

Michael, and others who are questioning Hoopeston's potential to grow, I encourage you to look at Hoopeston through a different lens – look at the positive assets that Hoopeston has that set the community apart from other

small towns; the historic Lorraine Theater, the Willdon Building, the Community Civic Center, a great hospital, a terrific school system, the Carnegie Library, the Sweetcorn Festival and Sweetheart Pageant, a community full of individuals who care about the city's future and the list goes on. Hoopeston will not change overnight but that change is already taking place. Hoopeston has made progress and with the community continually working together the City of Hoopeston will continue to produce positive results which will improve the Hoopeston economy and quality of life for current and future residents and businesses. If anyone has questions or comments please contact me at (217) 283-7873.

Shannon Ruh

Hoopeston Economic Development Director

Writer's letter not based on fact

In response to the letter to the editor on 12/4/07, there is no character assassination going on here against Dr. Timmons or any other doctor in his group. They are all fine physicians, as far as I'm concerned. The writer is correct when she states she doesn't have all the facts. I don't believe she has any facts at all.

As someone who has been closely attached to the hospital, I do have some facts. I have known Dr. Kuha for approximately 14 years, and I know for a fact that his ER skills are phenomenal; I would trust him with my life. One hundred twenty hospital employees of all ranks and positions agree and signed a petition on his behalf. The people in the community at large who signed a petition in support of Dr. Kuha also agree, as well as the many who are alive today because of him.

Is Dr. Kuha's record spotless? I doubt it, just as I doubt that Drs. Timmons', Kacz's, Garber's, and Desai's are spotless either. None is perfect, but as I say, they are all fine doctors. So why is Dr. Kuha being singled out here? Is it because of the "numbers" that Dr. Timmons spoke of in his letter to the editor? According to that letter, all of the numbers are up and things are great because of his team. If so, how can an important member of that team be dismissed? Dr. Kuha's qualifications as an ER physician cannot factor into this because his skills are not in question. I believe therefore that his dismissal was neither "appropriate" nor "necessary".

The number one concern of HCMH is the best patient care possible, which I believe it delivers. Losing an ex-

ceptional ER doctor seems to be contraindicated if that is indeed the goal.

Again, I speak no ill of the Timmons group or the hospital, and everyone is entitled to their own opinions regarding this situation. But at least have an opinion based on facts.

Eric Drain

Hoopeston

Employee support of doctor important

I agree with the letter by Kari Matthews, no one should be considered guilty of anything, without all the facts being known. I also agree that the doctors in question should not be required to give the public any information that would infringe upon anyone's privacy.

Having said that, what can the public make of this situation? We don't know what the deal is. However, the people who work at the hospital must be aware of what has taken place. Over 100 of these people signed a petition in support of the dismissed doctor. That is all I need to know. Sometimes people in charge of something get credit for the hard work of the people who actually are down in the trenches doing the work that is being praised. I hope this is not the case here!

If this was the first time a doctor was let go, that the public really liked, I guess it could be overlooked. That is not the case. Most of you can name all the doctors that this medical facility has dismissed without a good reason. How many more times will this happen?

Tom Evans

Hoopeston

Police News



Police are investigating a hit-and-run accident reported at 7:48 p.m. Monday at Main and Fifth St. Police said a semi tractor trailer hit an AmerenCIPS utility pole, then left the scene.

Weather



Chance of snow today. High 33. Tonight, mostly cloudy. Low 17. Tomorrow, partly sunny, chance of snow late. High 32, low 26.

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