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Starting April 29, 2008

Hours will remain the same!

Lourdine Florek  
owner/publisher

## Just the Facts

**Tuesday, April 29, 2008**

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication

**P.O. Box 441, Hoopeston, IL. 60942**

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## Community Bank's Wellington branch to close July 18

WELLINGTON—After more than 90 years in business, the Wellington branch of Community Bank will close its doors this summer.

The closing was announced to customers in a letter from bank President and CEO Bill Nicholls. According

to the letter, the bank's board of directors decided "that it is no longer economically feasible to operate and maintain" the facility at 222 E. Main St., Wellington.

The facility will close permanently at 5:01 p.m. on

**See BANK on other side**



*Photo by Carl Ankenbrand*

### *Prom royalty*

Dakota Okler and Carrie McCormick were crowned king and queen at Saturday's Hoopeston Area High School prom. Attendants are back, from left, Chrissy Morgenroth, Dane Nicholls, Kayla Potter, Kyle Jones, Brandi Warner and Josh Dobkins.

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**Bank** continued from other side

July 18. After that date, customers may make transactions at either Community Bank's main office, at 221 Bank St., Hoopeston or the facility at Rtes. 1 and 9, Hoopeston.

Two employees, Louise Barten of Hoopeston and Sue Williamson of Prairie Green, will transfer to the Hoopeston facility, Nicholls said.

Originally called The Wellington Bank, the facility opened in 1913, when Isaac E. Merritt and Mark R. Koplin formed the Merritt and Koplin Banking Company. Merritt put \$5,000 of his own money in a safe in Alex Pate's store as the original capital and began doing business on May 8. The bank was chartered in October 1913.

A year later, the name was changed to The Wellington State Bank and it was relocated in a new building on the south side of Main Street, where it has remained.

Merritt was its first president and later became the bank's first chairman of the board, an office he held until his retirement in 1946. Murry F. Merritt, his nephew, served as cashier from the bank's inception until his death in 1948.

According to information provided by Nicholls, in 1918,

the bank's resources were \$120,210.57. At the end of the third quarter of 2003, when the bank celebrated its 90th anniversary, resources totaled \$75,840,000.

According to records, the bank was robbed once, in 1921, when thieves broke into the bank and blew the safe door off, making off with lock boxes. After the excitement, the vault was given two safe doors, one inside the other.

A second robbery attempt was planned on Oct. 24, 2001 when a trio of Hoopeston men planned to commit the crime. Hoopeston police were alerted and, after a chase, captured the men before they reached Iroquois County.

In the fall of 1948, Murry Merritt died. Robert Holden was named the new cashier and one day found a \$25 bag of pennies under the safe in the vault. The money was not accounted for and so was given to Grace Merritt, Murry's widow. She purchased a bond with the money and years later, the FBI became interested in the bond and came to Wellington for information. By that time, the bond had been cashed.

However, according to legend, (as handed down by Robert Totheroh) an FBI agent spotted a \$20 bill on the floor and took it, saying it was counterfeit.

The bank expanded to Hoopeston with the facility at

**Police News**



A 58-year-old woman reported Monday that someone entered a garage in the 200 block of West Maple and took several tools.

**Briefly**

**Calendar winner**

The April 25 \$100 winner in the HA Music Boosters calendar drawing was Margaret Sims, Hoopeston.

**Dedication ceremony**

Hoopeston Education Association recently planted trees in honor of Mark Conolly and Dan Park. A dedication of the trees and plaques will be held at 3:50 p.m. Tuesday, April 29 near the high school baseball field.

**Basic first aid course**

A basic first aid course will be offered from 9 a.m.-noon Saturday May 3 at Hoopeston Community Church of the Nazarene, 402 E. Honeywell Ave. This course is ideal for teachers, Boy and Girl Scouts, Explorers, life-guards, adult and child care providers, parents and anyone interested in learning first aid.

Cost is \$20, which includes materials. Pre-registration is required by calling Ryan at (217) 379-0792.

**Summer Fun League**

Come join local bowlers on Thursday nights for the Summer Fun 9 Pin League. Eight weeks of fun, non-sanctioned, only four people per team. League meets June 5-July 31. For information, call Leona York at 283-6803 or Doug at Fast Lanes of Hoopeston, 283-6505. An organizational meeting will be held at 7 p.m. May 22 at Fast Lanes of Hoopeston.

**Weather**



Mostly sunny today. High 51. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 36. Tomorrow, partly sunny. High 63, low 51.

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

Rtes. 1 and 9 and, in 1986, the bank sold from the main shareholders to Coyn Richardson of Charleston. The next year, the name changed to Community Bank, with the main bank located in a new building on Bank St. At this time, the Wellington facility was made smaller but remained in the same building that housed it since 1914.

**Instant Cash Wednesday**

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Hoopeston Migrant Head Start is accepting applications for Health Coordinator and Bus Aides. Spanish preferred but not required. Please send resume to P.O. Box 136, Wellington IL 60973 or fax to (815) 984-4500 or call (815) 984-3706 with any questions. EOE

**HOUSES FOR RENT**

House for rent in Rossville - 2/3 bedroom, newer kitchen, carpets and furnace. Close to school. \$450 per month. Deposit and References required. No pets. Call 217-304-6547 for application.

**RUMMAGE SALES**

1024 W. Young, Hoopeston. Saturday, 7-? Name brand clothes & shoes, baby clothes, holiday decorations, misc.

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