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Vermilion County STD rate increases, official tells council

The good news is that Vermilion County is one of 22 places in Illinois that received a grant to help lower the rate of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

The bad news is grants were awarded to counties whose rates far exceed the state average.

Steve Laker, Vermilion County Public Health Administrator, and Linda Bolton, community relations coordinator, talked about the issue at Tuesday night's Hoopeston City Council meeting.

The rate of Chlamydia in the county rose 53 percent from 2000-2007, Laker said. In the same time, gonorrhea increased 75 percent, compared to increases of 31 and 13 percent statewide.

Laker said the Illinois Department of Health decided to award grants – Vermilion County received \$10,000 – to the 20 counties with the highest STD rates. “Due to some ties in this dubious contest, they actually ended up awarding 22,” Laker said.

Along with the primary problem of spreading STDs, the increase statewide has been a drain on hospital emergency rooms in Illinois. Laker said the minimum cost for a hospital diagnosis of an STD is \$600.

While Vermilion County offers STD clinics at its



Jeff Johnson, left, is sworn in as Hoopeston Ward II alderman by city attorney Paul Manion as Mayor Bill DeWitt looks on at Tuesday's Hoopeston City Council meeting.


Danville headquarters, they are offered twice weekly, from 9:30-11:30 a.m. “Unfortunately, lot of people needing STD services don’t get up ‘til then,” Laker said.

Screenings are also offered at family planning clinics in Hoopeston and Danville and twice monthly at the Vermilion County Jail.

To help take the strain off hospitals, \$7,000 of the grant will be used for STD screening and treatment at Aunt Martha's Federally Qualified Health Center in Danville.

See COUNCIL on other side

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Council continued from other side

Other grant money created a pilot program at Catlin High School where a health department health educator works with students about STDs, decision-making, social/emotional development and how to say “no.” If the program is successful, Laker said, the health department will try to get it in other school districts.

Many school districts are not keen on having such programs in their schools. Laker said the health department started in 1977 to provide sex education information. “There was a huge backlash,” he said. “Frankly, it’s not much different now.”

While it is the second largest city in Vermilion County, Hoopeston has the third highest rates for STDs, behind Danville and Georgetown. In 2007, Hoopeston had 17, or 3.5 percent of reported cases of Chlamydia, compared with 388 (79.2 percent) in Danville and 18 (3.7 percent) in Georgetown, and four or 1.3 percent of reported gonorrhea cases, compared with 275 (91.7 percent) in Danville and five (1.7 percent) in Georgetown.

More information on the STD report - along with other health issues - is available at the health department’s website, www.vchd.org.

In other business, the council:

- Approved a redevelopment agreement with Shaileesh Patel for a motel at Rtes. 1 and 9. Under terms of the agreement, Patel will be reimbursed for 60 percent of Tax Increment Financing-eligible costs, up to \$485,000. The city will receive the other 40 percent.

In order to be reimbursed, Patel must request reimbursement and must submit bills for services that are TIF-eligible, said Alderman Bill Goodwine, city finance committee chairman.

The agreement will be valid only if the city receives a No Further Remediation (NFR) letter for the property from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, gets clear title to the property and if Patel builds the motel.

- Approved Jeff Johnson as the new Ward II alderman. He replaces the late Jerry Yonkers.

- Approved a police pension ordinance, outlining how pension funds will be invested. The lack of an ordinance was cited in a pension fund audit, Goodwine said.

- Heard from Alderwoman Nancy Stipp that a sound system will be installed Saturday in the council chambers.

- Heard from VISTA volunteer Jean Minick that the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies approved Hoopeston’s request for affordable housing. The next step is a marketing study, which should be done in the next two months.

Weather



Mostly sunny today. High 84. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 62. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 81, low 60.

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



Hoopeston Multi Agency Lazy Days Cafe

Thursday, Aug. 7 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

BLT & Chips or Chef's Salad

Dessert & Beverage

\$6 per person

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Hoopeston American Legion

502 E. Penn

Classifieds

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407 W. Dice, Hoopeston. Sat., Aug. 9 & 16, 8-2. Sm/Med adult clothing, misc. Christmas & household items, small appliances, toys, games & books, bowling ball. Something for everyone!

706 E. Penn, Hoopeston. Sat., 7-noon. Baby items, toddler girls, girls kid clothes to 6X.

1111 E. Thompson Ave. Hoopeston. Sat Aug 9th 7AM-12. Kids & adult name brand clothing, excellent cond. Boys infant-2T and 12-20 & girls 3T-10. Kids shoes, soccer gear. Mens & women’s sizes large-xl. Lots of household/kitchen items, some small furniture. Lots of toys, play kitchen, baby carrier w/base, books, girls bike. Lots of misc. WILLAMINA TSHIRTS-all sizes!

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