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Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication

P.O. Box 441, Hoopeston, IL. 60942 **www.justthefacts.net**

Health center plans program to attract, train local nurses

Hoopeston Regional Health Center recently announced that the facility is sponsoring a new program called the Registered Nursing Loan Forgiveness Program. This program will be available to area residents starting in the 2009 fall semester beginning in August.

The program is designed to provide area residents with the opportunity to obtain a Registered Nursing Degree from Danville Area Community College through sponsorship of all costs related to completion of the program. In return for the payment of all tuition, books and fees the student will sign an agreement to work



BROCKUS

at the facility for two years upon graduation from the program.

According to Harry Brockus, the CEO at Hoopeston Regional Health Center, the new program offers those who have the desire, but not the finances needed, the opportunity to pursue a degree in nursing. Brockus felt it was important to get a program in place before any staffing concerns arise.

Residents interested in obtaining more information about this program may contact Betsy Morgenroth at (217) 283-3111 or e-mail betsy.morgenroth@hoopestoncmh.org.

Council hears second presentation on affordable housing

Developers of a proposed affordable housing development made a new pitch to the Hoopeston City Council at a special meeting Monday, after receiving a lukewarm reaction at last Tuesday's regular meeting.

Kay Gregg of Illinois Community Action Development Corporation and Mike Niehaus of Windsor Development, answered questions from some of nearly 50 residents who attended the meeting, as well as those of council members.

Gregg outlined the history of the proposal, which began with a housing study conducted in Hoopeston, which showed a need for family and senior housing.

Plans call for 25 single-family homes to be built. The \$3.5 million project will include 13 three-bedroom homes and 12 two-bedroom models and will include ranch and two-story homes.

Niehaus said houses will be energy efficient, including Energy Star appliances, insulation and en-

ergy efficient windows. "They exceed current standards," Niehaus said. "You could heat them with a candle, they're that tight."

Rents are income-based. Two-bedroom home rent will range from \$282 to \$450 per month, Gregg said. To qualify, tenants must meet income guidelines, based on the area's median income of \$49,400.

Alderman Bill Goodwine expressed concern about how the project will benefit Hoopeston when there are few jobs available. "We don't have jobs to offer so it will be people upgrading themselves in town," he said. "Without jobs, I don't know how we're going to attract people who want to work."

Admitting there is a stigma attached to housing for low income residents, Gregg stressed that tenants will have to pass credit and background checks. Convicted felons will not be allowed to rent the homes, nor will those who have misdemeanor convictions in

See HOUSING on other side


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Housing continued from other side

the preceding three years.

She doubted that Public Aid recipients would be able to meet income requirements and added that, in a worst case scenario, standards would not be lowered to find tenants.

Niehaus said the development will have a "trickle



Photo submitted

Dorothy Vaughn, Marian Eggbrecht, Dennis David and William DeWitt

Eggbrecht, David marry

Marian Eggbrecht, of South Bend, Ind., and Dennis David, of Hoopeson, were united in marriage on February 18, 2009, at the Rossville United Methodist Church. Dorothy Vaughn served as matron of honor and William Dewitt served as best man.

The couple are residing in South Bend.

Obituaries

DUNCAN - Doris Duncan, 76, of Hoopeson,, died at 1:05 a.m. Monday, Feb. 23, 2009 at Hoopeson Community Memorial Nursing Home. Funeral service will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at Pape Memorial Home and Cremation Gardens, Danville. Burial will be in Spring Hill Cemetery, Danville. Visitation will be 4-7 p.m. Friday at the funeral home.

up theory" making local landlords want to fix their rental properties or tear them down but Goodwine disagreed, saying landlords have walked away from dilapidated properties, resulting in the city having to pay to tear buildings down.

The key to the success of the project will be the management company hired to oversee it, Gregg said, adding that she is negotiating with three companies.

The management company will make sure tenants abide by their leases and will evict those who do not.

Another concern expressed by Goodwine at the February 17 council meeting was the lack of a specific place to put the development but Niehaus said a site was chosen an hour before Monday's special meeting.

Allen Decker, who purchased the former Hoopeson Industrial Corporation site, agreed to a price for 10 of the 31-acre site, with a first right of refusal for the city on the remaining 20 acres, Niehaus said.

While Goodwine has concerns, other aldermen said the city should move forward.

Turning down the plan would be like "telling 25 families 'you can't improve the quality of your life because we're skeptical,'" said Alderman Bill Crusinberry.

Alderman Jeff Johnson said "if we never do anything, we'll never gain anything. Things don't happen by doing nothing."

Mayor Bill DeWitt told the council he hopes when the issue is voted on at the March 3 meeting, "we have a completely different attitude than we did the last time."

Economic developer Dana Goodrum said there is positive feedback in the community about the project. She said she spoke with Harry Brockus, Hoopeson Regional Health Center CEO, who is enthusi-

Weather



Mostly cloudy today. High 50. Tonight, chance of showers. Low 37. Tomorrow, showers likely. High 49, low 30.

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

astic about it because employees there will qualify for the homes.

While houses start as rentals, after 12 years, tenants may receive financial counseling and put themselves on the path to purchasing their homes after year 15, which will add more revenue to the city.

Initially, the homes will generate \$17,000 to \$18,000 in property tax annually but after they are sold, taxes will be based on assessed value, like any other home.

Another boost is expected during construction. Niehaus, the general contractor, said he tries to subcontract work to local contractors and buy as much materials locally as possible.

Classifieds

APARTMENTS FOR RENT

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