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Just the Facts
Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication
 P.O. Box 441, Hoopeston, IL. 60942 www.justthefacts.net

Hoopeston Area school district faces cuts in state funding

Hoopeston Area, along with schools across the state, is experiencing budget concerns due to tardiness of state payments.

District Superintendent Hank Hornbeck told the board at Thursday's meeting that Illinois is about 150 days behind in payments and currently owes the district \$239,000. Three of four payments in February and March were made with federal stimulus funds, leaving local school officials to wonder about future payments.

The district could face an even greater loss of state revenue with proposed cuts to the foundation program—the basic amount paid to districts per student. Currently at \$6,100 per student, the state is considering lowering the foundation amount by \$500 or \$700 per student. Using the lesser amount, Hoopeston Area would lose about \$600,000 in state aid, while at \$700 a head, it would lose \$850,000, Hornbeck said.

Also in danger is the \$48,000 reading improvement block grant and the School Safety In Education block grant of \$26,000.

Cuts are also expected in categoricals—programs mandated, but not fully funded by, the state, such as special education transportation and personnel, and regular transportation.

"It's not bleak, but things aren't looking any better than they did a month ago," Hornbeck told the board. "In fact, it's looking worse."

To counteract funding shortages, the board will review finances and meet with Hoopeston Education Association to discuss ways of trimming spending. A list of cuts is expected to be discussed at the board's March meeting.

Hornbeck emphasized that district residents should complete the 2010 census form, which will be used for school and other funding. "Please fill out your

census and fill it out correctly," he said.

In unrelated business, the board:

- Approved the resignation of member Steve Highfill, who is relocating to South Carolina. If the board does not name a replacement within 30 days, the Regional Superintendent of School's office will have 30 days to fill the vacancy. The new board member will serve until the April 2011 election, when a replacement will be voted on to fill the remaining two years of the term.

- Approved resignations of Penny Woolwine, middle/high school choral director, effective at the end of the school year; and Stefanie Cornelius, Maple personal aide, effective February 18.

- Hired Jane Long as Maple personal aide; Anna Maria Wilcoxon, part time speech language pathologist; Rodney Comstock, head mechanic; Mark Eighner, business manager/transportation director; Tim Hillard, network technician; and Curt Spaur, building/grounds supervisor.

- Approved rehiring all district principals, including Anne Burton, middle school; Lori Eells, Maple; Larry Maynard, high school; Linda Sheppard, Honeywell; and Dan Walder, John Greer.

- Discussed a security system for the middle/high school. Options being considered include one with 41 internal and external cameras, estimated at \$35,000; one that would replace key entry with access card entry at six doors in the buildings, estimated at \$22,000; and a third that would use a buzzer system to allow visitors in at each school.

The administration and buildings and grounds committee is recommending using the camera and access card systems, Hornbeck said. Hoopeston Area has received about \$40,000 from an outside source to help pay for the system, he added.

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Signs asked for returning Airman

Airmen A1C Aaron Foster, who is a 2008 graduate of Hoopeston Area High School, within the last three weeks completed his tour in Afghanistan at Bagram Airforce Base in Kabul.

Aaron will be home Saturday, Feb. 27 at 1pm and we would like to ask all area residents and businesses that have signs and the ability to make them say what they want, to welcome Aaron and his wife, Allison, who is also an Airmen, home for their 21 day visit. If you could please have your signs changed for this one day at least it would be greatly appreciated by not only us, but by Aaron, who has missed good ol' Hoopeston!

Please have your sign read something like this if possible: *Welcome Home A1C Aaron Foster and his wife A1C Allison Foster* or *Welcome Home A1C Mr. & Mrs. Aaron and Allison Foster*.

Tom and Angie Foster
Hoopeston

Who cares?

What a great community we have here in Hoopeston. We have caring people, lots of small and medium size businesses. There are a lot of folks trying to make a few extra dollars to survive. A place I am proud to call home.

Who listens? When we the fine folks who live here voice our opinion about a decision the council is making, it doesn't seem to matter. Right, wrong or who cares, they move ahead with their own agenda.

Have you considered? For a handyman who may only do a few jobs a year, helping seniors or low income families for small dollars an additional \$50 and \$180 is too much. So the small time handyman says, "No, I can no longer help you," or adds \$20 or \$30 to the charges. Think about it!

You've already been told! Having a million dollars of insurance is certainly no guarantee a caring person in Hoopeston will not get taken advantage of. The insurance does not protect a person from being overcharged, charged for incomplete work or shoddy work done with inferior materials. Will the council be at my house reminding me when I'm looking for someone to paint my house to ask if the painter has insurance? I don't think so.

Know when to end it. Years ago while working at The

Chronicle, I had an idea I believed in with all my heart. I presented it, I promoted it, I really wanted it to happen. I thought it would be better for my customers, my company and me. Well, no one would go along with my idea. I was disappointed, yet I quietly forgot it.

Run to the finish? Is this a race for re-election? You won't get my vote. Is this to show us the Hoopeston people aren't smart enough to make their own decisions? Wrong. Does the council just want to pass a ridiculous ordinance and fee that no one wants because they can? I hope not.

It would be best for all concerned that the council drop this whole matter of regulating contractors and making it more difficult for them to do what they do so well.

Who cares? I care about this great community. I care about the small handyman and the large contractors, lawn care persons and all in between. I care about struggles many are going through now to stay in their homes. Our community is eager to have new businesses and we need them. Yet, we spend hours working on ways to eliminate or inconvenience the many small businesses we already have. What's up with that?

Who cares?

Bertha Parsons cares.

Bertha Parsons
Hoopeston

Visiting Hoopeston was (mostly) good

Just a short note to convey to the people of Hoopeston what a nice community you have. Recently our family traveled to Hoopeston to look at a car located at the Dick Jones car lot. The people there were very, very knowledgeable and helpful. While visiting your community, we took in a movie at your theater, which was an excellent experience. We had the best time dining at a small Chinese restaurant in the business district. The dining experience was worth the trip in and of itself.

The only downside at all was our attempt to purchase a News-Gazette at a local grocery store's service counter. There is no problem doing so at our local store's service counter. However, at your local grocery, the service counter employee curtly instructed us to go stand in the long line and go through the checkout lane.

All in all we enjoyed our exploration of Hoopeston

and look forward to visiting again during your summer festival.

The Olvera Family
Champaign

Deficit spending

Deficit spending is now \$12.3 trillion plus what the president has proposed for new fiscal year

What can the U.S. Government credit with putting us in such poor financial conditions? The national debt is simply the amount owed by our federal government to holders of U.S. debt instruments. Gross debt is the national debt plus intra-government debt obligations or debt held by trust funds like the Social Security Trust Fund. This involves all the costs of running national business. What our government needs to conduct business for this nation is part of the deficit spending.

There is another aspects of our nation's debt: foreign owners of U.S. Treasury Securities. Our government needs to borrow money from foreign countries to run our nation. As of September 2009, we owed foreign countries \$3 trillion, 428 billion. We owe China \$798.9 billion and Japan \$751.5 billion. That amounts to nearly 50 percent of what is owed to foreign countries.

Another factor is the U.S. trade deficit. We were minus about 30 billion in 1991 and in 2006 it had grown to minus 817.3 billion. I guess NAFTA did not help us. No wonder there have been so many riots when these folks get together.

At the same time the USA is the largest contributor to foreign economic and military aide to a sum of \$22.8 billion in 2006.

What this means to me is that it looks like we are competing with foreign countries in borrowing

Weather



Partly sunny today. High 33. Tonight, chance of flurries. Low 19. Tomorrow, chance of flurries. High 26, low 11.

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money from our own coffers, and at the same time, we are borrowing money from foreign countries to put in our coffers. We are also giving out foreign aide to some of the same countries that we are borrowing money from. Could what I just say, be true? I think I have a headache! Can you figure this stuff out? It just doesn't make since to me.

If I am about to go bankrupt, how can I go around spending money I do not have? Somehow this nation has to understand that the USA cannot be the world's everything. If other countries need our military protection, we need to charge them a fee for our services. What other assets do we have that could help us out of this out this never-ending cycle?

Tom Evans
Hoopeston

Is it worth it to bring your items in to sell at Global Fashions this Saturday? I paid out almost \$600 to one very happy person last week! Small town doesn't mean small quotes! Buying in Global Fashions 2 years in March! Bring in your jewelry & old coins! Saturday!

Classifieds

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